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# THE GOSPEL OF THE MANHOOD

JOHN HUNTLEY SKRINE



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THE GOSPEL OF  
THE MANHOOD



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# THE GOSPEL OF THE MANHOOD

*Marked*

BY

JOHN HUNTLEY SKRINE, D.D.

AUTHOR OF 'PASTOR OVIVM,' 'CREED AND THE CREEDS' (BAMPTON  
LECTURES), ETC.

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## FOREWORD

QUIA VIVO ET VOS VIVETIS

O Soul, when thou art beckoned hence  
From friend and comrade, kin and kind,  
And homeless o'er the bourn of sense  
Must wander on adventure blind,  
How in that region wilt thou fare,  
The dark, the void, the vast, the rare ?

' There waits a Hand the dark within  
Shall reach me through the void and hold.  
There beats a Heart of human kin  
Shall make the frail adventurer bold.  
Him can I know as I am known,  
And by His manhood lives mine own.'



## PREFACE

CHRISTIANS are to-day with some insistency questioning their fellow Christians, 'What think ye of Christ, whose Son is He?' They require the answer that Christ is the Son of God. With that answer they must not be content. For to be the Son of God—what is that? If Jesus is divine, what is the nature of that divinity, what are the attributes, properties, characters, marks of the Godhead we assign to Him?

In this essay an answer is attempted. It is sought to learn the Divinity of Christ by a study of the Humanity. For as God the Father is revealed to us by Christ, so will the Godhead of Christ be revealed by His Manhood.

That Manhood must be studied not in the record of a few years 'beneath the Syrian blue,' but also and yet more in the record of 'the Living One' written in the experience through two thousand years of a multitude whom no man can number.

What shall be the method of this enquiry? Shall it be the research of the documents, the Gospel narrative and the other canonical writings; the Church's tradition expressed in creeds, decrees

of councils, writings of doctors ; the interpretation of these testimonies by historical and philosophic criticism of to-day ? There is a method of enquiry which includes all these, and is the oldest instrument used by man in the pursuit of higher truth. 'We learn but what we live.' Is not a method shadowed forth in that disciple's word who wrote, 'In Him was life, and the life was the light of men' ?

J. H. S.

OXFORD,

*February, 1922.*



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# PART I



# THE GOSPEL OF THE MANHOOD

## CHAPTER I

### THE MANHOOD TAKEN INTO GOD

'IF the foundations are cast down, what can the righteous do?' asked a psalmist, when the ungodly were in power.

When the foundations of social order are shaking, 'What can Christians do?' is an echo of his cry to-day.

Seven years ago, when the ungodly, who had long ago bent the bow and made ready the arrows within the quiver, now rained his bolts in sudden onslaught on just men living peaceably in their habitations, the free peoples of Europe, there was heard the question, 'Where is Christianity, and what is it doing, that this wrong can be?' The implied reproach was not very pertinent to that situation. The Church of Christ may have had something to answer for in the portent of Prussianism, but it was a much-diluted responsibility. To-day when the wars are in the field of industry



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and the chief or most visible enemy of mankind is not Cæsarism but the common frailty of common men, struggling as all must to live and to live more fully, with more wage and less work, but not knowing what life truly is and how it can be got, and prompted by evil guides to seek life for themselves by deeds which would make havoc of their brethren's life and then their own—to-day there is more pertinence in the taunt that the Church is of no use in this calamity. For while the Church cannot control the rise of a single bad man or bad nation, she may with some reason be blamed for a corrupt condition of human nature at large. She has not Christianised the multitude of them that in name believe in Christ, if they have no more love than this for their brethren for whom Christ died.

Well, the foundations are being shaken: what can the Church do?

The psalmist, when he asked the question, seems to have supposed the Church could do nothing, for his answer was, 'The Lord is in His holy temple: from thence He will rain his judgment upon the wicked in snares and fire and brimstone.' The action of man in this cause of righting the wrong is there not contemplated. The thing that is done upon earth, God doeth it Himself.

The Lord of the Christian is indeed in His distant holy temple of the eternal, but also He is present here on the low earth. Our avenger is the Incarnate One. He is in His temple the Church.

## The Manhood Taken into God 17

What then can the Church do in this peril of human-kind ?

She must do as the Incarnate at the first bade her do, if she would be of the Kingdom of God. She must be born anew.

‘To be born anew’ was the word of Jesus yet in the flesh. Since then, our word for it is ‘to share in the Incarnation.’ The Church must return in mind and will to the Incarnation fact, must realise by thought and act what it means when she confesses that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and giveth life unto the world.

### THE INCARNATION IN HISTORY

How is the Church to-day understanding the fact of the Incarnation? We will not judge of this by the pronouncement of some who speak for her, when we are hearing reproachful voices raised against teachers who attempt to define the fact of Christ. ‘These men blaspheme: they deny the Divinity.’ Let us not go aside to study and criticise the Christology thus indicated. Instead we will turn on their pursuers with a challenge: ‘What think ye yourselves of the Christ: how is He divine?’

They will, I think, answer that by the testimony of Paul Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by the rising from the dead; that John writes that every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; that sixteen centuries ago, the Church in council, with the Holy Spirit

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present, has pronounced the Christ to be of one substance with the Father.

But then to be Son of God—what is it? To be of one substance with the Father—what manner of existence is this?

They will answer, rightly, that these are things we cannot know, because the divine existence is beyond our sight and even our imagination. (And this they would do well to remember also when they become accusers of the brethren as mis-believers.)

But then 'to come in the flesh'—this should be knowable, since we do know what flesh is. How then did Jesus Christ come in the flesh?

Was it as the folk of Lystra thought who believed that gods came down in the likeness of men? Or as the Docetics who fancied that the Christ on earth was a Divine One wearing the mask of a human face and form, which was dropped on His return to heaven?

Shall I be pardoned if I confess to an apprehension that the Lystraean and Docetic conceptions of the Incarnation are with us still, in suppression and disguise, but present and operative? Many Christians would find, if they analysed their thought, that the credal article 'came down from heaven' brought them the picture of a divine Spirit who for a term of years and for a special purpose took possession of a man's bodily and mental organism, and having accomplished that purpose resumed the divine estate. The better

instructed escape from that crudity of carnal imagination by help of fleshless abstractions, the 'Two Natures in one Person,' and 'the Manhood taken into God.' These definitions are what Bacon called Phantoms of the Theatre, ill-founded theorising of philosophers. Let us, in the spirit of the Baconian science, pass from these metaphysical shadows to the Interrogation of Nature. Let us question the human event which we call the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. What experience of mankind is registered in that word?

Is it any other than this? A man was born in a Jewish family who in the closing years of a brief life impressed some of his contemporaries with the belief that in force and purity of spirit he surpassed all measure of human excellence; who in obedience to his ideal of righteousness submitted to a painful death at the hands of men who rejected it; who three days later was found by his near followers to be not dead but alive and capable of intercourse with them and co-operation in the work which had engaged them together with him before his death; who thereafter made his presence known and his commanding influence felt by an ever-growing multitude of followers, man by man, among all races and in all times and at all stages of culture; whose effect upon those with whom the personality has had contact has been unfailingly an enhancement of those qualities and faculties which distinctively constitute the human personality and make its superiority to other

orders of living creatures ; last, of whose spiritual kingdom over human spirits there are no indications of an end but all promise of an infinite and endless extension.

This is the fact of Incarnation, *so far as that event is measurable by human experience*. This is that much of the Christ which we can claim that we *know*. What more there is of the being of Christ than this—what the manner was of His pre-existence ‘before the world began,’ what relations He now holds to the Final Reality which we call God and which Jesus named ‘My Father’; what it is to Him to sit at the Right Hand—this is what we do not know, but conjecture ; it is not a matter for experience to investigate but for reverent imagination to explore. Man is indeed impelled to explore it by an instinct which it is his soul’s health to obey. But of this region of knowledge he is not occupier, but explorer only. Let him be content not to think of himself more highly than so.

The men of Christ have not been thus content. At this day a churchman who makes this distinction and should accordingly confess that he knows that Jesus rose from the dead and is alive for evermore, but that he does not yet know assuredly whether He was ‘begotten before the worlds’ and is ‘co-equal with the Father,’ would be told by some of his brethren that he was lacking in the true faith and not a fully-qualified member of the Church fellowship. These brethren are at this time expressing such a judgment This censor-

ship is an unschooled presumption on their part and ought to be corrected by authority; but it is not being rebuked, audibly at least, by those wiser Christians who are over them in the Lord and should admonish them. To those more competent judges in matters of faith one is moved to make appeal.

But the force of that appeal lies not only nor even most in the truth of the distinction we are marking between that part of the Christian creed which is based on the past and present experience, corporate and personal, of the Church and her members, and that other part which the Church professes dogmatically indeed but with a tentative dogmatism, and the member confesses in loyal assent as an act of mental fellowship. The force which should most move the authority will be the demonstration that those articles of belief which are the formulation of the experience are those of which a confession with the mouth is needful for churchmanship and a belief in the heart sufficient for salvation.

It is the demonstration which shall here be attempted.

My task is to show that a doctrine of the Incarnation which should formulate those experiences of mankind outlined above—the unique moral greatness of the earthly career of Jesus, the sacrificial death, the return of His human personality after death to intercourse with His human friends, the continued and limitless activity among men of the force of His still human personality—that such

■ doctrine of the Incarnation-fact is a true gospel of Christ and a power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, with that belief which is faith indeed. It will be called here the Gospel of the Manhood.

To those who have been reared in Christianity from earliest years an elemental Christian truth can rarely come from any teacher, however great a doctor, with the thrill of surprise, of a shock that vivifies. Once it so came to me. A saintly bishop<sup>1</sup> was speaking to a group of boys on whom he was to lay the hand. He warned them of the need of perseverance. 'Some of your elders, once as earnest as you to-day, let drop after a time their prayers and communions. Why do they so? I think it is just their ignorance: they do not know that Jesus Christ is alive.' That brought the thrill to some who heard it. 'Jesus Christ is alive.' It has thrilled in us ever since.

But how elementary a truth! We all know that He rose from the dead, and that He came to His disciples and said, 'Behold that it is I Myself,' the same man as the Master who was taken from their head three nights ago. Of course we are not ignorant; we know that Christ is alive.

Yes, but do we know that *Jesus* is alive—Jesus? If we know it, this is the truth by which we can be born anew and help to that new birth our brethren who have not known Christ or have

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<sup>1</sup> George Wilkinson, Bishop of Truro and of St. Andrews.



forgotten what they knew. When the foundations shake, this is what the Christian can do. We can know that Jesus Christ is alive, and teach others so.

As at present we know it indeed; but we have overlaid and clogged and confused that knowledge in our efforts to know also what else and what more He was and is than Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary. We have clouded a vital knowledge of the Christ by a metaphysical; have stretched imagination to touch what cannot be touched, the inaccessible reality of the eternal Godhead, and have overreached that which experience can obtain and grasp of the Abiding Manhood. This last ought we to have done and not to have left the metaphysic undone. To the Manhood, to Jesus of Nazareth who is alive, let us return, for it is He who is the Maker of the Church and will be the Saviour to-day of Society.

We have to face as in every age of the Church the question, 'What think ye of Christ: whose Son is He, Son of God or Son of Man?' And when we have answered that He is both, we have next to answer, 'How, if He be the one, can He be the other also?'

Christians answer variously, the more part saying that they do not know how it is, yet believe that so it is, for so the Church has taught them. Others say it was 'by taking of the Manhood into God.'

That last account does not seem to advance us. It is but a repetition in more abstract and therefore in more empty terms of the doctrine that Christ is



both God and Man. What is 'the Manhood'? Is it a thing at all; is it anything but a word? What is 'taken into God'? Is it anything but a phrase?

Let us, since it is no less a thing than man's fate, our own fate, which we are pondering, change words for things, formulas for realities. I believe that not the Manhood was taken into God, but the Man. Jesus the son of Mary, carpenter in Nazareth, prophet in Galilee and Jewry, victim of the jealous priesthood by a cross on Calvary, this Man with all that made him man was taken into God: on this I build all my being's hope, from this I would draw the light for all I think and the force for all I do.

What do I mean when I tell myself that the Man Jesus Christ was taken into God? What is my reading of the Incarnation?

Before I offer it I will protect my reasonings by recalling, even if it be with a provocative emphasis, the distinction, so much ignored in present theology between truths which we can grasp with the firm hand of Experience and truths which we can only feel after with the groping finger of Imagination. I will seek accordingly to know what can be surely known of Christ here and now, his Manhood, and then to reach forward to what further knowledge is awaiting our touch hereafter. Let me so learn Christ as to know Jesus the Man and through that knowledge learn Christ the Son of God.

Yet the distinction is more momentous than so. It is not the difference only between knowledge which is in quest and knowledge which is in possession. It is that to know what Christ is as He is with God matters greatly, but to know Him as He is for us men matters all. The one truth has satisfaction for our intelligence, the other has fulfilment of our soul ; the one concerns us as thinking men, the other as men ; one is the scope of a passion to know, the other of the passion to be.

## CHAPTER II

### WHAT IS THE INCARNATION ?

THE Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the action in which the Word became Flesh—this is the matter of our enquiry. Not the eternal realities which were before the earth's foundations were laid, not the doctrine of the Word that was in the beginning with God, of the Pre-existent Christ, the Only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father : not this, but the truth of Christ as Mary the Mother knew Him, babe and boy and man ; as Peter and John knew Him, master and friend ; as Caiaphas and Annas knew Him, prophet who rebuked their life ; and then as Mary of Magdala knew Him, risen and not yet ascended ; as the two at Emmaus knew Him, revealer of the world-secret, the sacrifice that saves ; as John knew Him on the twilight beach and whispered, 'It is the Lord' ; as Paul at Damascus discovered Him, the prophet whom he persecuted and now will serve as Lord ; as every sincere disciple in every age has known Him, Christ the soul's-friend of the Christian. We would so learn Christ, because so He can be learnt with assurance that what we come to know of Him thus will be knowledge indeed.

But first there is a misconception which is sure to embarrass our enquiry with a false issue. Let me forestall and challenge it. There are those who will suppose that to assert the Manhood is to deny the Godhead; will say that here is that old error of Humanitarianism, that Jesus Christ is just a man of unique genius and unique experience, and that with such a creed of the Incarnation they can have nothing to do.

That is not because the fact is as they suppose. It is because of the difficulty inherent in the Incarnation problem, the difficulty of holding together in one the two conceptions of Christ as God the Son and of Christ as Jesus of Nazareth. We can indeed name the two in one breath, can with the mouth confess 'that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man'; but we cannot with the mind think the two in one thought, cannot combine in a single figure the double image of that Divine and this Human. This has been the cause of the zig-zag course pursued by Christian thinking in the interpretation of the Incarnation, swerving too far either towards the idea of the Divinity or of the Humanity, and always tending to correct the one extreme by the other.

I must remove, if I can, a misconception which may alienate from my enterprise just those whose company I desire. I will then challenge whoever so misconceives my aim to find a sentence in what follows which, either directly or by just construction, in asserting the Humanity of Christ denies or makes

doubtful the Divinity, under any definition of the Divine which can be sustained in competent argument. This first. Then I will invite him to re-examine his own creed of the Godhead, to put into plain words his confession of Christ as the Son of God, to compare his rendering of the doctrine with mine, and show me where his version of the truth differs from mine or what it adds to mine that can complete it. I am doing my best to apprehend, with my own apprehension and not another man's, the truth that saves us: in turn let my brother, also with his own understanding and not that of other men, do his best to better this attempt of mine, Christ being his helper.

Briefly, I invite him to study with me the Incarnation not in a controversy but a dialectic. It will help to that fruitful intercourse by relaxing the tension of a prejudice against my enterprise, if I make at once plain and frank confession of my belief in the Divinity of Jesus of Nazareth. It must be at this point a confession only of the fact, not of the manner of the Divinity, not of the mode and process of the Incarnation. The manner of the Incarnation, the sense in which Jesus is divine, the process by which the Divinity is inwrought into the Humanity, this is the matter not of this page but of many pages which will follow.

I believe then that Jesus was divine as Paul and as John (of that Gospel) believed it, and on the self-same evidence as they. For how came John to believe that in the Man of Nazareth the Word

was made flesh ? He has told us. ' We beheld His glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.' When and how did John behold this ? It was when ' the Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth.' The life in the flesh of Jesus of Nazareth—this it was that declared to the eyes of John that Jesus was the Only-begotten. That which Jesus said and did and that which befell Him among men, this it was that made the disciple know the Master for divine. John, whoever and whenever he was, had learned Christ so : the Manhood had revealed to him the Godhead. Even as ' no man hath seen God at any time, but the Only-begotten Son has declared Him,' so also no man could see the Son, in His being as God, but the Man Jesus Christ revealed Him to us. I then will follow that disciple to learn Christ as he learned Him ; I will fix my eyes upon the Manhood. As once the Baptist ' looked upon Jesus as He walked and cried, Behold, the Lamb of God,' so will we look upon Jesus in His mortal walk and yet more in that unending after-walk among men from that past day to this passing day, and will cry, ' Behold, the Son of God. For in Him is life, and the life is the light of men.' This then of the Word of life we have seen with the eyes and handled with the hands of our mortal experience ; our experience to-day and not only that of Paul and John. For to us also the life has been manifested and we have seen it, that eternal life which was with the Father ; it has been manifested unto us,

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even us of this far day. For because He lives we live also. That we have a life unto Him we know ; then we know He lives.

Yet I may still leave my presumed objector but half-satisfied unless I also indicate how on my own part I make the passage from the confession of Christ as Very God in Very Man, which rests on a knowledge of things which can be known, first backward to the Nicene confession of Him as Very God of Very God who was in the beginning and who came down from heaven, and then forward to the confession that He sits now at the Right Hand.

How the mind can pass from the belief in a Christ of history back to the pre-existent Christ, begotten before the worlds, is a mental action which I cannot define : nor can my questioner. The clause, 'who came down from heaven,' must seem to him as to me an anthropomorphism coined by the psychologic Childhood of the Church and now explaining nothing. But does it not reconcile us to this impotence of our imagination if we reflect that we are also impotent to imagine how our own human soul 'came down,' came, that is, out of the Great Deep into this sphere of time and space ? How the soul came is not to be known, yet is believed. Being what it is, it must have come from that Deep, we say. How the Christ came from the Innermost of the Great Deep is more believable : He can have come from no less an origin, the Man Jesus being what He was ; but it is as

little to be known. My belief in the Pre-existence of Christ is the same as my questioner's ; but it is only thus that either of us believes.

But of the passage of mind forward from the historic Jesus to the ascended Christ some imagination there can be. I can hold before my mind an image which is real to me of the Person of Jesus clothed still with those properties and powers of human nature which He wore in the days of His flesh, but able now to exercise them (as our Christian experience is that He does and has ever done) with a range and potency no longer limited but, as two millenniums of experience induce us to infer, infinite as God is infinite. To say that 'the Manhood is taken into God' is to say that the Man who was Jesus of Nazareth did not by the death on the cross cease to be, but exists in the sphere of spirit, saying to men, 'Behold that it is I Myself,' and there thinks and acts by such processes of mind and will as a man thinks and acts ; but with this difference, that whereas men's thoughts and deeds operate only in narrowest limits of time and space, the human powers of Christ's Manhood are exercised in all times and all places and with the potency of a nature that is one with God's. The human become infinite—is not this the Divine ? Who will help me to a deeper understanding of the Manhood taken into God than this, that those attributes of a human nature in Jesus which had likeness to the attributes of the divine nature, received in Him after the Passion an infinitude



of reach and energy like the infinitude of God.<sup>1</sup>

But there are those whose sympathy I covet most but shall not reach by the way of metaphysic. Many are the devout spirits, with true vision of divine things, who have neither the wit nor the will to measure one man's theology against another's and to find fault with the logic of either, yet who will repel such disquisitions as the above as a dry, cold abstraction, vacant of appeal to those Godward emotions which are their own faith in Christ. I shall ask them to think again, and to think this way: 'If Jesus of Nazareth is still alive and is able to have that life everywhere and in all times, then He can be living in this place and this home, at the side and in the touch of this one insignificant child of the human family who is named as I am named. Then He can know me with an intimacy with which no only human intimate can know, and can love me with a love more penetrating than the mother who bare or the helpmate who is one flesh and soul with me. Across all the centuries and the space of all the worlds the Man of Nazareth, greatest soul in all earth's

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<sup>1</sup> Yet the belief in the infinitude of Christ cannot logically be claimed as an *experiential* knowledge. Our experience is only of two thousand years in which he has exhibited a likeness to the limitlessness of God. That is not enough to demonstrate Him infinite; only an experiment prolonged to infinity could do that. But it is enough to yield us the induction that the Christ has the *quality* of infinity. And this suffices us, for this much of infinitude is enough to secure the fortune of our human soul.

history by a pre-eminence which cannot be measured till we can measure the interval which divides the Perfect from the Imperfect, can draw near to me with a nearness which not even a Peter or a John or a Mary of Magdala knew when the Master walked in Galilee. Whence is this to me ; to me of such little faith, in God's sight, such little worth in man's ?'

The wonder of this ! The glory of it !

Shall I then close my eyes to this wonder, forbid myself this glory, because the near Presence which casts the beam on me is not the Son of God, dweller in the innermost and the outermost of the infinite, but a Son of Man, very nigh to me, about my bed and about my path and spying out all my ways because He walks in them Himself ? It does not derogate from the Father's majesty that we believe this Father's work is done in the low world's affairs not by the abrupt intervention of a supernal Hand, but by the instrumentality of men's natural reasonings, passions, energies, put in use by the viewless finger of God. The Son of the Father is not less divine, but more, because as the Father worketh hitherto so He works, even by this instrument of His eternal Manhood and its organs of human mind and human will. What other appliance than this would be apt to the material in which the Manhood must work ? Nay, what meaning has the Incarnation else ? The Word became flesh and tabernacled, said John, among us. That abiding-place, then, of a human nature in which

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He came to dwell, is it now removed from Him as a shepherd's tent ; or has the Good Shepherd no longer need to tabernacle close beside His flock ?

Ah, *then*, when we shall have learned all that learn we may of the powers of the Son of Man ; when we shall have measured, as mortal eye can measure it, the length and breadth and height of the Abiding Manhood that lives and acts as in heaven so in earth—then and only then let us forget the things that are behind as we reach forward unto the things that are before, even that prize of the Vision of Him, where He is in the bosom of the Father, the only-begotten Son of God.

## CHAPTER III

### ATONEMENT BY THE GIFT OF LIFE

WE have been endeavouring to conceive of the Incarnation, not, except almost allusively, as that truth is given us by theological speculation, but as it is gained by experiential knowledge of human fact. Studied so, the event of the Incarnation is seen to be that one spirit among spirits human, Jesus of Nazareth, maintained after the crisis of natural death an existence still human but now free from the limitations of time and space to which humankind in the flesh is subject. We speak of the Man Jesus as exercising in the post-mortal existence the human functions of thought and act even as men exercise them, but, as men cannot, everywhere and always and with all the potency of a nature that is one with God's.

This Oneness with God—what is it ?

For of oneness there are kinds and degrees. There is the oneness of mechanical juxtaposition, as where a carpenter mortices two planks together : of molecular cohesion, where two masses of hardened earth-dust are compressed into one block : of chemical combination, where two gases unite and form a new gas distinct from either. But also

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there is vital union, the oneness of vine and branch of limb and body. This is the highest degree of unity which we can discern in the world of sense ; no lesser kind will give us the idea with which to interpret the oneness of Divine and Human.

God and Christ are one by the Vital Union, by the oneness of a life which the one has unto the other.

What is Life? What is it to be alive?

That is the all-comprehending question. To find the answer will be to find the secret of existence, the world-process, to learn what God and Man is. None of us nor perhaps any generation of our children is going to master that secret ; it is a discovery with which ' man never is but always to be blest.' Yet man must always press on and draw as near to it as his experience of living and his reflection on that experience can bring him. Have we then not got thus far—it is further than we were fifty years ago—that life is not merely the self-adjustment of an organism to an environment, but ■ self-adjustment which is *mutual, a reciprocal gift of self-hood between the creature that is to live and the creative world in which it lives?* The green leaf drinks in hydrogen from the sphere of air around it and breathes out oxygen into the air ; the one function makes possible the other, and this exchange is the life of the plant. More perceptibly, the higher animals maintain existence by respiration, and by manifold interchanges of the substance and forces of their bodies with

substances and forces of the external world. Man as animal, but as the 'social animal,' exists by the same functioning as the brute, but also by an interchange of the individual's physical and mental forces with the forces of the family, which gives him birth and nurture and receives the nurture-due of his social service. Man the being spiritual has the life spiritual still by an interchange of selfhood. His mind and will go forth from him across the horizon line of his physical senses and enter the super-sensible environment, and 'the powers of the world to come' enter and indwell his mortal being. This interpenetration of heaven and earth, this mutual indwelling of mortal and eternal being, is that which we call the life of soul. Let us give it now a more distinctive, more illuminative name: it is *Human* life; it is the life which man has when he is fully and perfectly that which it is man's nature to be, when he answers to the idea of Manhood as that idea was and is in the All-Reason which creates the worlds. If this interpenetration of the temporal and the eternal could be whole and without reserve, if man could in achievement as in aspiration 'let *all* that is within him praise the Lord' and let the powers of the Lord fill *all* the vessel of his manhood, then would men be one with God in the vital union, that oneness which is the life of Two, who live each unto the other. But with men this has not been possible.

With men. But with a Man it has been possible. One Man, Jesus the Galilean, did have the life of

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mutual indwelling with the Eternal. He did effect the interchange whole and without reserve of all that was within him with all of God which the vessel of a human mind and will could receive and contain ; he had the life unto the Father of the spirits of all flesh in fullness and without defect ; he was the express image of the Father. Let us have done with our meagre negative conception of Jesus as the Sinless One, a truth we cannot let fall, yet cannot, being a negative, establish by proof. Jesus is the Living One [ὁ ζῶν], the Man who has the perfect Life unto God. This, being positive, can be proved or disproved. And it is proved, first by the witness of those who shared the temporal existence with Him, and who record an obedience to the motions of the Divine Being whom He called His Father which was carried to the uttermost issue, a death for righteousness' sake ; but next, more demonstrably and all-convincingly, by the testimony of all human history that this Jesus did by the perfect gift of self to God, which the death crowned and attested, attain the perfect life unto God. For the disciples of the Christ, from those few who saw Him risen to the latest of those unnumbered in all time who have not seen yet have believed, through their own soul's experience, are witnesses that Jesus did by sacrifice attain the eternal life. This is what they know of Jesus ; they 'are not ignorant, they know that Jesus Christ is alive.'

But to confess the Christ-fact in these terms,



to say that One Man had and has that union with the divine Being which is a perfect life unto God, is not yet to render a doctrine of the Incarnation. For that doctrine must tell what the concern of mankind is in that event which we call the Christ-fact, the Incarnation in history. If Jesus by His self-sacrifice attained the eternal life for Himself, how is mankind bettered unless that sacrifice enables others to attain the same? That it does so enable us is our creed as Christians. Christ by His cross and passion, we say, has redeemed us, has wrought an Atonement for us, has opened to us the gate of everlasting life. But how has He done this? He who is Himself at one with God, how does He also at-one his brethren? In the technical language of theology, how is the Atonement related to the Incarnation?

The ages have answered this variously, according to the variety of their world-views. While men still thought, as primitive man thinks, that the Unseen Powers if offended can be pacified by pains endured by the offender, or even by a substitute, they spoke of the Cross as a propitiation and of the sufferings of Jesus as vicarious. While they misread the significance of the metaphor of Blood, that vehicle of physical and symbol of super-physical life, they could use language more becoming to a pagan devotee submitting to the blood-bath of the Taurobolium, and place themselves in fancy where the blood from the Crucified could fall 'gently on them drop by drop' in purgation of



sin. Or in days when slaves and prisoners could be released for money they talked of the pains of Christ as ransoming souls from the tyranny of Satan.

Much ingenuity has at times been spent in justifying these 'transactional' conceptions of the redemptive act. But we—'let us not talk of them, but look and pass them by.' For our age has new growing thoughts of God and man which will make these older thoughts drop from our mind as the push of life in a tree sheds the fibres of the past.

But the 'ethical' theory of the Atonement is one we must not pass by, at least without a reverence. That the sacrifice of Jesus wrought its atoning effect by its action on the mind and heart of men, showing them the hatefulness and the mischief of sin; that Christ's death was a necessary part of the self-revelation of God, of which revelation the object was 'to excite in men that love which could inspire in them sorrow for past sin,'<sup>1</sup> this interpretation of the Passion cannot grow old and vanish away. Yet it needs, even it, to grow wiser, and so to live on, and still on, as man's wisdom grows with time more wise. There is much fresh knowledge of his nature and its powers waking now in man, and if the 'ethical theory' can expand to receive this new wine in an unbursting vessel, it will not be superseded as those others,

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<sup>1</sup> Rashdall, *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology*, p. 443.

though it must suffer an enhancing, nay, a transforming change.

*Quia vivb et vos vivetis*, said Jesus : life in Him would make life in them. How can this thing be ?

‘Ye shall live,’ He said. But He might have said and said it over that supper-table, ‘Because I live ye too *are* living,’ for already in the days of His flesh the life in Jesus of Galilee was making life in the Galileans of His company. Do we think Jesus was not taking away the sin of these men and women until after the Passover when the Lamb of God was slain ? What meant that outburst of Peter, ‘Lord, to whom should we go ? Thou hast words of eternal life’ ? Words of life ; words, that is, which make life in the hearer. The very secret of the Christ-action is packed in the phrase ! For how did Jesus make in them this life ? By the words ? That is indeed what is commonly supposed, as by teachers of one school who trust to evangelise the world with the definitions of ancient church councils, or as by more naïve evangelisers who think the whole rule of faith and practice is to be found in the Sermon on the Mount. But Jesus did not convert men by His teaching, though He taught, and needed to use words. Nor yet by His actions, though the deeds of healing brought listeners to Him, and the great deed of His self-sacrifice is an example that has fired all His followers. There was some other force than word or act for the reconciling of the world to God. What was it ? We have no name for it,

and yet it should be well known to us, for it is the force by which the Gospel is preached and Christians are made, always and everywhere. It is the force by which the great missionaries have won peoples to Christianity, by which the humblest pastor of the rudest flock shepherds the sheep of Christ's fold; nay, by which the religious mother turns her child's heart to the Divine Ones of whom she tells him.

For how is that least of gossellings done by this simple catechist of the hearth? It is not the news of the unseen Father and of Jesus the friend of children that makes a Christian of the little one. It is the way of the news-bearing, the manner of the news-bearer: the mother believes and loves the truth she speaks of, and there goes virtue out of her as she speaks and stirs in the childish breast an answering belief and love. Faith in her makes faith in him. There passes the act of life spiritual, the interchange of soul, the heart-beat of a mutual faith of her and him. When Jesus at the supper made the promise, 'Because I live ye shall live also,' He was promising to do what this homely parent-gospeller and indeed every scribe better instructed than she unto the kingdom of heaven does, when the word of God prospers in that whereto He sends it through these human ministers. But what is that? The faith that was in the Master made faith in the disciple, that mind came to be in them which was also in Christ Jesus; the knowledge of God and the love of God which burned in

the heart of the Prophet of Galilee kindled its fire in their bosoms; His thought of the Fatherhood and His will to Sonship became thought and will in His mortal brethren; because *He* was living the life unto the Divine Reality, therefore they lived also.

Life in Jesus caused life in disciple; but how? By what law of fact?

As one draws out in this parallelism of the Christ's action and the Christian's the characters of the process by which faith in one makes faith in another, the name we need seems to rise to the mind. That 'Thought-transference' which our psychologists are earnestly investigating—could any word give us a distincter image of the communication of faith, even if it should be a word only, with no fact in nature corresponding to it? But if in human nature there is a fact answering to the word, if thoughts really are transferred from one mind to another without language or sign intelligible by the senses, then we need look no further than this natural law for an account of the spiritual instrumentality by which religion is propagated. If thoughts of a common order can by a kind of radio-activity of soul be projected from one personality to others, then more easily, to our imagination, can thoughts of the highest order 'strike through a finer element of their own' and make impact on the personalities attuned to echo their vibration.

But what do we know about this natural law of

Thought-transference? We are being presented with a welter of new phenomena classified under the provisional names of Telepathy, Telergy, Thought Reading, Automatic Writing, Clairvoyance, Clairaudition, Psychometry, Hypnotism, Psychotherapy, and the ambiguous products of the spiritistic séance. What the true fact is under any one class of phenomena thus described we do not yet know, but there does seem to be a fact underlying them all alike which it is hardly presumptuous to claim as known.

That fact is the unity and continuity of human mind. The Race has one mind between all its members. 'God has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth,' and more truly yet 'of one mind.' The physical interdependence of individuals has been recognised from the first, but till of late we have supposed that a man's consciousness was his own; every man's mind was his castle and closed to strangers. It was a proud conceit of oneself, though also a forlorn one.

Yes ; in the sea of life enisled  
With echoing straits between us thrown,  
Dotting the shoreless watery wild  
We mortal millions live *alone*.  
The islands feel the enclasping flow,  
And then their endless bounds they know.

But the poet's image of individualism can be inverted. Under the 'echoing straits' and all

the 'watery wild' of the physical scene is the unseen continuous rock floor of ocean binding at the root all the thousand emergent peaks into 'a single continent.' Wherever a stir of earthquake happens in that vast undivided hidden plain of earth-crust, the spasm will course through the length of it and the lone islands learn their oneness by the shock that moves them all. We mortal millions are alone only as they. We are separate to the eye, but out of sight are rooted in one indivisible whole, the total consciousness of Mankind. Whatever stirs at one point of that vast extension can send its vibration in any direction where the laws (not yet known to us) of that motion and of the matter which it moves permit it to travel and to be received.

In the present maze of precarious conjectures, half-tested hypotheses of presumptuous theorisings, and 'footless fancies' of the unlearned, a single certainty makes good its presence. It is that there is one body of human consciousness and we all are members of this one body; our individual consciousnesses inter-act each with all by the functioning of some organic force, the spiritual counterpart to the nervous energy which co-ordinates the play of organs in the physical frame of man. To some more conspicuous manifestations of it we used to give the name of 'personal magnetism'; and 'personality' seems still the only word we can find to aim at the mystery. We will call then this mysterious factor of our social existence the *Force*

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*of Person.* While no one can at present supply us with any satisfying (definition) of Personality I content myself with recognising it as *Life in the highest mode of life*. This at least enables us to make practical use of the idea in reasonings on our interests as beings who are persons. All life is inter-action of man with men or with the Greater than man: most of that interaction is done with hands that work and voice that communicates our purposes, but some of it, in a proportion which we cannot measure, even conjecturally, is done by an untraceable effluence of force from the inner personality. Now that effluence from the one person in the vital interaction of two cannot operate without an answering effluence from the other; it is a life-function, and therefore an interchange of two selves. It is true that in these thought-transferences the responding mind may be unaware of its response to a message, and the transmitter be unaware of the transmission; but this makes no difficulty. Much of the nervous system of the body lies outside the power of the will and the knowledge of the mind; the nervous system of the total personality may be in the same case. I shall claim therefore that the telepathic intercourse is an activity of the life of person; more subtle, later in discovery, than the well-recognised human powers, presumably therefore more deeply seated and of more potency and significance for human fate.

I have just called it the 'telepathic intercourse,'



using the most popular name. But telepathy, experience of the far-off, disguises the nature of the fact by laying the emphasis on distance. Distance, however, the interval of space crossed by the intercourse, is immaterial. When two that sit by a hearth think the same thought, not by chance coincidence but through the initiative of one and the unconscious response of the other, it is a telepathy that happens. So I explain Christ's action on the soul of followers who walked close at His side as telepathic, though the interval was no wider than that distance which no instrument can measure that divides every personality from every other. And I call it by that name though the force of person in Jesus was in those circumstances using as vehicle the normal organs of self-communication, speech, gesture, manner, and expression of face. For as has already been reasoned, it is not words, however true, that carry faith from one mind to another: it is the faith that carries itself, though speech and other signals make its paths straight for the passage. The prophet makes his convert not by the words of the prophecy, though they be both true and eloquent, but by a particle of divine fire they convey to the hearer's heart from the spark that has fallen from heaven on the prophet's own.

So then if I would figure to myself the Atonement by which the Christ takes away the sin of the world, I put aside all the old similitudes of ransom, and propitiation and substitution, as



blurring and distorting images. Instead we place ourselves in fancy at the side of one of those who knew Christ after the flesh, as the Baptist when he looks on Jesus as he walks ; we hear John say as to himself, ' Behold, the Lamb of God ! ' What does the desert prophet mean ? He could not tell us more than our own heart is telling us. But something comes to us, felt like a touch of hand, from the silent Presence there : something in us rises up to meet it with a wistful and a shrinking welcome. What is it that comes and goes between us and Him, this Stranger who has said no word and whose eyes are not turned on ours ? What is it ? John knows, as we know : it is the Spirit of Sacrifice, sacrifice that has been kindled on this man's soul ; sacrifice that maketh life. John, on whose soul it has smitten, has found the word for it, he knows not how. ' Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.'

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCERNING SIN

WHEN I offer as an account of the Atonement that Christ takes away the sin of the world by the infusion of life into the sinner, I shall without doubt be met with the objection to my theory that it fails to recognise the 'sinfulness of sin,' and is to be condemned as a Christian condemns the negative conception of the Greek with whom sin was only *ἀμαρτία*, the missing of the mark in life. Sin, it is reasoned and very rightly, is not negative but positive ; if in its milder forms it can be thought of as failure to unite the self with God, in its severer forms it is hostility to God, a war on good, a hate of love ; and the death which is the wages of sin cannot be mere loss of life and extinction of being. These are no just wages of such enmity ; there must be some manner of penal suffering as the religious imagination, Jewish and Christian alike, has variously but consistently pictured it.

The objection that my account of sin is negative only does not hold against the logic of my theory. For this does not exclude the conceivability of sin which shall be actual hostility of the human to the

divine. Life is the self-interchange or mutual indwelling of Whole and Part, Creator and Creature. Sin in all its common forms is only a failure of the Creature to effect the surrender of self to the Creator ; but it can be in its violent form an attempt to invert the due relationship, to assume the part of rebel angel and essay the subjugation of the law of the whole by the single will. ' The attempt and not the deed confounds' no doubt the attempter ; and the sin which we can confidently so describe is surely rare. But the case is covered by the theory of Atonement by Life.

Nor does the objection hold that under that theory the consequences of sin are inadequate, if the meaning of Life is understood. For since to live is not merely to exist, to ' be there,' but is to exist in a relation of self-interchange with the Reality, of union with God, the true opposite of life is not non-existence but an existence in conflict with Reality, in war with God. Sin, then, which in its lesser degrees may be only failure of life, loss of intercourse with the divine, can in its extreme degrees be the state and condition of clash with the forces of Actuality. ' The Soul that sinneth it shall die ' ; but if death shall be not dissolution and surcease of being, not only to give up life which is union, harmony, peace, but to receive the pains of separation, jar, unrest, how does sin lack punishment ? The fate of a lost soul, not committed indeed to a hell of ancient human fancy, but only ' cast out,' a restless mote that hangs and flutters

in the cold and outer darkness of the abyss ; or, dreader still, a live frame of nerve and sense that knows and feels and anguishes as it is battered on the resistless engines of the Almightyness, with the pulse and rhythm of whose order it has refused to chime—such a fate of a lost soul is terrible enough, if terror can deter. But such a fate of loss and cold, of unrest and agony, is the doom to which we point the soul of the sinning when we image salvation as life and the loss of salvation as death. Death, when it is soul's death, is not 'sleep's twin-brother,' but a worm of unpeace that will not die, a fire of sorrow which is not quenched.

Whether the 'sinfulness of sin' on which theologians insist can ever really attain the intensity of a spite against good as good, a hate of love as love, a war on God for being God, and whether this can be eternal and therefore a sin which hath never forgiveness either in this world or in that to come—this is a question which our hearts will persist in asking, but our head perhaps never answer. An answer cannot be demanded from this my theory, that in the older categories of Life and Death we have a deeper and a more interpretative analysis of human destiny than in the categories of salvation and sin in more modern doctrinal systems.

Yet this much shall be said. The two voices of our nature, Instinct and Reason, seem alike to refuse conviction of the final persistence of sin and of its punishment. Reason argues aloud that if God is

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God indeed, Evil must at last be subjected to Him that He may be all in all ; Instinct whispers, low but irrepressibly, that if Love be Love, God must forgive even the unforgivable.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ATONEMENT IN THE FORTY DAYS

WE have sought to analyse the process of the Atonement as it was worked by the Christ already in His mortal ministry. It was the impartment of life unto God to human souls by the stroke and counter-stroke of personality between Christ and a disciple. Because He lived, they lived also; the life in Him, the life unto the Father in heaven kindled by His self-sacrifice, passed by a blest thought-transference to the spirits of those who 'walked with Him' in Galilee or Jewry. So they received atonement.

What was the process of the Atonement after the Christ had suffered: what happened in the Forty Days?

We are apt to regard the Resurrection too exclusively in its evidential aspect, as the proof of the Divinity of Christ. Let us view it here in its effective aspect. Let us ask, not what was proved by it about the human destiny, but what was done by it for man. In this view the tangled problematic incidents of the Forty Days—the Empty Tomb, vacant grave-clothes, the appearances and vanishings, lose in importance in comparison with

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the main fact. This fact is the opening of the work of Atonement by Christ with the powers of His Manhood, which had now, through the passage from the mortal condition, become eternal, infinite,<sup>1</sup> divine.

What, then, was the process of Atonement at the epoch of the Rising ?

It was the selfsame process. The vital intercourse of the Master and the Disciples, suspended for a brief historic moment by the death and burial, was resumed. There was renewed the reciprocation of soul and soul, the mutual indwelling. Again the spirit of sacrifice which maketh life passed from the Christ to the Christian. This is the essential reality of the Resurrection ; all the problems must be studied in the light of this.

That is not how the first Christians expressed the fact of the restored intercourse. They said, ' We have seen the Lord.' Seen Him. What was it to see ? We easily bemuse ourselves over that word ' seen,' and must clear our mind by close study of the stories.

Mary of Magdala stands before the empty sepulchre, weeping. Someone from hard by asks her why she weeps, whom is she seeking ? She sees but does not recognise the speaker, guesses it to be the garden-keeper ; but it is a friendly speech, a voice of sympathy, and it stirs in her the response

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<sup>1</sup> That is, as already noted, potentially and progressively infinite.

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of an appeal for help. 'Sir, tell me where you have laid Him?' We who look on and overhear know who the Speaker is, and perceive that a stroke of personality has reached her from the presence of Jesus. She has felt, and she interprets it, but dimly: what she hears and sees lets her discern only a sympathising stranger, who speaks and raises to mind and eye the vague image of the gardener. But 'Jesus saith unto her, "Mary."' The stroke falls again, a second stroke stronger than the first, 'increasing like a bell' upon her sense. It goes home: it is the very tone of that loving friend who healed her disorders, no mere sympathiser with a woman in distress, but this one woman's dearest intimate. At the touch of her own name in the tone which had carried it a while ago from that best helper's lips there rises in her consciousness the Speaker's name: it is He, my Master; and hard upon the name rises the very form and feature, and her hands are clasped upon His feet that the lost friend may not be lost again.

'Ah, but,' comes the correction, 'handle Me not. I am not now as hitherto, for this touch of hands. I am not yet ascended into the Unseen, but thither I am ascending: go tell my brethren this.'

'Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord.' But her seeing, was it not this? The self of Mary had met the self of Jesus. She had known Him by the act of vital union, the interchange of person and person, by



this moment of life lived unto Jesus who yesterday was dead, and to-day, behold, He lives.

And Cleopas with his unnamed companion, how was it with them? A stranger overtakes them. 'What is this strange talk I overhear?' They halt and turn on Him eyes of sad surprise, then tell Him how their nation's hope has perished. 'And yet' (for something in the Stranger's eyes makes them doubt their doubts) 'there is that tale the women brought us, the stone rolled back, the vault empty, an unsolved mystery. Still, some of our men too went to judge of it, and the body was not found.' The Stranger takes up the talk, carries their mind with Him down the rolls of the prophets, how they all say the Christ must first suffer and only then be glorified. The listeners' hearts burn. With what fire then? For we to-day can read those prophet rolls, and where do *we* find the Christ plainly imaged except in that one scripture of the Lamb led to the slaughter? Yes, but we only *read*, we do not, as they, *listen*. It is not the words of this speaker recalling the Red Sea baptism, the uplifted serpent, the prophet rescued from the deep, the scapegoat, the silent martyr who saw of the travail of his soul; not the mere words is it that is digging down to their sorrow's root and loosening its grip upon their soul; not this, but something in the voice, and behind the voice; not the tale of the Sufferer Glorified, but the Suffering Servant Himself, now already in the Glory, but walking at their side on the stones of the Emmaus

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road. This it is that deals stroke on tender stroke upon their heart, waking it to answer his heart-beat with living beat of their own. But see, they are at their own door in Emmaus before they know,—like disciple John that evening of a day of wonder, when he roused from his pondering and found that ‘straightway the boat was at the land whither they were going,’ because the Master had wondrously come aboard. They sit at meat ; and why is the guest honoured as host to bless the meal ? He blesses and he breaks the bread, and then—‘O brothers,’ cried Cleopas that night to the Ten in the Upper Room, ‘when He broke the bread, then I remembered your supper with Him, here in this very room, and—and—I caught my breath—for there was He, His very self. His eyes looked us through and through. But when I breathed again, there was no one there, no one, only the empty chair. But it was He; we know it; it was He.’

What was it that happened ? Why were ‘their eyes holden that they should not know him,’ and at last freed to know Him ? If seeing means eyesight, the functioning of the physical organ of vision upon a physical stimulation of the sense, Cleopas was seeing the Lord all that long walk. But he did not see Him all that while. Suddenly he does see ; but nothing new can have happened to his visual sense ; his eyes, one must suppose, were acting no otherwise than in the hour before. No, it was the stroke of the personality of Jesus

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which was new. The person of Cleopas received and responded; a vital act of recognition took place. This vital act was the Seeing.

Ah, brother Christian of two thousand years after, have not you too walked the road of sorrow, and known your heart burn with warmth from the Companion of your way? You did not see, but was He less there at your side than at the side of Cleopas? I trow not.

What, then, again I ask, was the thing that happened? Was it the mangled body come from the vault left empty? Or was it the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, alive and again making His disciples live?

But that other tale of an Appearance, given with a brevity that provokes a curiosity it does not appease, 'the Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon.' What was it like, that appearing of the Lord to Peter? I can only think of it through the eyes of an artist of our day whose reverent imagination has pictured the scene. It is a lane in Jerusalem, half in dusk, half in moonlight. In a nook of the wall is a crouched figure, head sunk in the hands, in grief's self-abandonment. Behind him, lit by the rising moon, stands Another. Peter has not seen Him. But as sometimes a man may 'behold a little touch of neighbour in the night' and turn to make his feeling of the friend into sight of him, so I think it is with this bowed mourner toward whom that Other's stretched

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hand is moving. A touch upon the hunched shoulder ; Peter turns his head, and then—how will it be with him? Ah, surely it will be for him as for every other servant of the Christ, who has slept the last of mortal sleeps—‘ When I awake I shall be satisfied with Thy likeness.’

But Thomas: here was a witness who knew, what many of us seem to ignore, that eye-vision is not enough, seeing is not believing ; he must know by touch. He was right in discrediting eyesight. But did he use his own test of touch? Not, as one reads the tale. The accost of Jesus, ‘ Reach hither thy hand,’ is enough. In the voice that gives him back his thought which the Master—the very way of Him—has read, the stroke falls on the doubter, and he, stronglier than some readier believers, returns the stroke. Thomas saith unto Him, ‘ My Lord and my God.’

And Paul, who declared that he too had seen the Lord. His case is crucial in our argument that the seeing of Jesus risen was an act not of ocular vision but of spirit’s life-energy, an interchange of personality by which each abode in each. For Saul at Damascus Gate saw no form of Jesus. How could he? He did not, it would seem, know the prophet of Nazareth by figure and feature. When the stroke of His personality fell on Saul, his consciousness could not interpret it to himself, as could a Peter or a John, a James or a Thomas, by raising to his percipience an image of the mortal shape and lineaments of the Nazarene. To him

Jesus was not a face and a figure, but a mind and a will, mind and will of a rebel against the Church of God, enemy of the Faith, antagonist therefore of Saul, the champion of the Faith. This personality was pressing itself upon Saul the Pharisee ; but, like a magnet which can attract and can repel, like a 'dæmonic' genius who conciliates one man and antagonises another, it was at first stirring in him not allegiance but hostility. Saul 'verily thought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.' He was vehement and indomitable in the endeavour to live unto the divine Reality as he at that time amiss conceived it—a Law not to be amended, an order of priesthood unchangeable, an ancient mystery never to be enlarged or re-interpreted. But that Reality which pressed upon him in the Person of the martyred Prophet struck stroke after stroke upon his consciousness. There had been that obstinate bearing of Peter and John before the frown of the Sanhedrin, there was the haunting face as of an angel which went before his inward vision ever since Stephen pleaded and was stoned, and the eyes of the other 'dear men and women whom he sought and slew,' and who prayed for him in dying. But most of all there was that ghostly Comrade who rode at his bridle toward Damascus and, sultry hour by hour, urged a speechless argument, insistent, untired, not to be put by. Then how the last stroke broke through the stubborn fence of zealotry in the 'I am Jesus

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whom thou persecutest,' and was answered by, 'What wilt Thou have me to do?' our imagination cannot figure to us. But neither can we follow the movement of our own will in the leap with which in any great decision a man passes from irresolution to resolve. All such conversions are wonderful, though not with the wondrousness of Saul the persecutor become the bondman of Christ. But this a man knows, that in such a moment of self-surrender he can pass from death to life, life of a human spirit unto the Spirit which is the Reality of All. So was it with Paul. By stroke and counter-stroke of the divine-human person and the human, he knew that Jesus was alive, Jesus whom he persecuted. Because the Christ lived, he lived also.

But Paul's conversion was not yet Paul's salvation. In the flash of his discovery and the surrender to that Presence Paul was born alive unto Christ, but the birth was not the life. He had come, in our formula, to 'know that Jesus is alive,' but he must continue in that knowledge. If after the vision at Damascus he never again had 'seen the Lord,' the vision had been in vain. The proof to him of the reality of the Christ was his lasting and ever-growing experience of a 'power of the Resurrection,' empowering his whole career of thought and action. He 'could do all things through Christ who strengthened him.' He knew that the Christ lives, because that abiding companionship was an abiding source of vitality in his

mind and will, that filled his being with all joy and peace in believing it.<sup>1</sup>

*De nobis fabula narratur.* As Paul saw the Lord, so do we others in all the days from the Apostles onward, we the multitude of them that believe. Perhaps we do not realise that this is the way in which we too are witnesses of the Resurrection. We have thought we believed in a Risen Christ because there is the story of it in the Bible, and the Church has handed on the tradition without a breach in the line or witness. And some of us, because they suppose their belief in the Risen One is founded on the truthfulness of men who saw Him rise, are scared and angered if some brother, not less equipped with reason and with love and faith than the most authoritative of those who censure him, says he cannot think it was the crucified flesh of Jesus that came through the barred door in Jerusalem, and walked the road an unrecognised stranger by the side of Cleopas, and vanished from the chair at the Emmaus supper-table. They are much offended with this brother; they say he must confess with them the 'physical' resurrection or else not be of their company.

These believers in a resurrection of the flesh, shall I tell them what they are like? They are

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<sup>1</sup> Let the modernist, and the orthodox who 'verily thinks with himself that he ought to do many things contrary' to the modernist's new doctrine, both remember Saul.



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like those startled Ten who, when Jesus Himself stood in the midst, would not believe it was He ; for how could the Man they knew, of like flesh and blood to them, have come through the shut door ? How could this thing be Jesus if it was not His body ? No, this is a ghost, not a man.

My brothers are like those men in that first moment of dismay. But they are like them, too, in that next movement of recognition, when 'the disciples were glad, seeing the Lord.' These were glad because they knew now that Jesus Himself it was : yes, and they knew—this, this I press upon my friends—they knew it was Jesus *because they were glad, seeing Him*. Gladness, happiness, joy—these are other names of life. Gladness ran in their veins because life ran there, the life which again after the death and its sorrow beat from the Master to them, from them to the Master. They knew that Jesus lives for, lo, themselves are alive unto the Lord.

The brothers I am reasoning with are like those Ten. They know that Jesus has risen because He has met them, and at the meeting life has kindled between Him and them. How know they that this life has kindled ? Even as we know that any life, of spirit or of body, is in us : they know it because it has made them glad, and gladder, and ever more glad, as only life can make glad. The disciple of our far day knows that Jesus Christ is alive because when he attempts the intercourse of soul with that unseen, unheard Reality, the Person



of Jesus of whom His Church has made Him know, lo, there comes life to him as it came to a Peter or a Paul. All his faculties of man stir in him and warm and expand with the current of that incoming life. The powers to think and to do are enlarged in scope and energy, venture is emboldened, endurance steeled, nerve in danger steadied: self-mastery in temptation is sinewed, recovery after lapse more sure, decision in perplexities more resolute, service of love to his fellows readier and more persistent. But above all these and in all these it is gladness that has entered into him and dwelt there: the peace of God is 'garrison' of his heart and mind, his 'hope is full of immortality,' and dull nature's dread of death suffers holy change, and is the tranquil, glad ambition of a career to be.

Since this chapter was written I have come on a passage in that deeply imaginative work of Margaret Oliphant, *The Beleaguered City*, Chapter IV., which will very helpfully eke out my own attempt to analyse the 'seeing' of the Unseen.

Lecamus, the visionary, is questioned about his meeting with his dead wife.

'Monsieur Lecamus, you will forgive me if I hurt you. You saw—her?'

'No. Seeing—what is seeing? It is but a vulgar sense, it is not all: but I sat at her feet. She was with me. We were one, as of old.' A gleam of strange light came into his dim eyes. 'Seeing is not everything, Madame.'

'No, M. Lecamus. I heard the dear voice of my little Marie.'

'Nor is hearing everything,' he said hastily. 'Neither did she speak; but she was there. We were one; we had no need to speak. What is speaking or hearing when heart wells into heart?'

## CHAPTER VI

### WHAT WAS THE RESURRECTION ?

WHAT reception will the foregoing argument meet with from Christians who are wedded to the primitive and not yet superseded conception of a Resurrection in which the material frame of the Crucified was reanimated and restored to intercourse, by the medium of physical organs, with the witnesses ? They demand, all the Church rightly demands, a belief in 'the historic facts stated in the Creed.' This reanimation is, they consider, one of those facts : my theory, they perhaps will say, offers in place of historic fact a mystical fancy.

I trust to show them that if there be fancy in either of us, it is in *their* reading of the story, and that it is my reading which is based on actuality.

My interpretation of the Appearances in the Forty Days is that the personal being of Jesus, now discarnate, was present to the person of the witness not in the sense of contact in space (though such contact can in our present knowledge neither be affirmed nor denied), but in the sense of a vital union effected between the consciousness of the Seer and that of the Seen. It was an act of life of one to the other. The recognition of the form

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and voice of Jesus was the articulate realisation by the witness of the impact of the Master's personality on his own.

Consider now a certain human fact within, as I suppose, the natural order, which science has lately extricated from the region of illusion and superstition—the appearance which we used to call the ‘wraith.’ An exact image of a man at the point of death presents itself to a friend at a distance, who has no knowledge or expectation of the event of the death and cannot therefore have conjured up a phantom in chance coincidence of time with the actual occurrence. What do we make of this? Shall I be easy to refute if I call the incident a specially drastic instance of a telepathic contact between the consciousness of the one man and the other? *Since the consciousness is the man*, this would be a real presence of the two personalities each to each across an interval of space without presence of the body. That which in the ordinary thought-transference is only a conception or an impulse conveyed to another mind and received by it in a purely mental reaction which raises only what we call an idea, is in this case so strong an impact on the receiving consciousness that the experience of being in contact with the originating consciousness is, as it were, read off in the alphabet of sight and sound. The brain of the recipient interprets the shock it has received by reacting in the mode of vision and audition: a shape is seen and a voice is heard.

I submit that this phenomenon of the 'wraith' presents us with an hypothesis of the Resurrection fact which unifies and elucidates the perplexing phenomena of the Forty Days incomparably better than the hypotheses hitherto offered. It adduces the *vera causa* which Baconian science demanded in a hypothesis. Here is a thing which exists in nature, is a real thing among things—the power of a man to be present to another man without the presence of his material body, yet with an appearance of that body to the bodily senses of the other. If such occurrence took place only between two living men, as in the 'phantasms of the living,' we should be entitled, if we believe in the continuity of things, to treat it as a *vera causa* yielding an hypothesis of the encounter of a discarnate with a still incarnate consciousness; for at the least there is reasonable expectation that a law of nature will be also a law of supernature. But ours is even a *verissima causa*, for this presence of one absent in the body can take place not only as in the phantasms of the living, where both are in the material existence, but when the man seen is on the border-line of flesh and spirit and even is, in some instances, already beyond it.

It is true that the apparitions we are adducing are rare, faint, momentary, and of the slenderest usefulness, whereas those Appearances of the Crucified were many, vivid, persistent, convincing to the mind and of immeasurable effect upon the will of the seers, and (what is the most essential

verification of their reality) have been substantiated by two millenniums of the Christian experience that Jesus who came alive is living still. Yes, but this difference in likeness is the very character which we ought to find in the event of the Resurrection, if our conception of the whole Christ-fact is true. That measureless interval between the case of an apparition of a man who has the powers and properties of human nature only in the degree in which we all have them, and the case of Jesus, the presentment to his friends of a Man in whom those powers and properties were in ideal perfection, how significantly is this interval parallel to that between the birth of any child of man and that entry into the world which we call the Historic Incarnation. As the coming of Jesus Christ was the due fulfilment of an earthly process set in motion by the Creator when He bade human life begin on this planet, and yet was made possible only by a new stroke of power from the Eternal, so the Resurrection is an event at once in the seen world and the unseen; it is a fruit of the working out of human nature's law that sacrifice makes life, and yet it is the Lord's doing of a thing nature could not do and therefore marvellous in our eyes. It was an event both normal and miraculous, nature and super-nature at once.

'Marvellous in our eyes.' Let me follow out that phrase for a moment. If our disputers over the miraculous would remember that 'miracle' is English for *miraculum* and by name at least

miracle (word)

means 'that which makes us wonder,' not 'that which contradicts laws of nature,' they would find the remembrance very clearing to the mind and exalting to the spirit. Wonder is the act of life in which the Self of a man opens itself in awe to receive the Greater than Self; 'the heart fears and is enlarged,' goes forth into the spiritual encompassment of our mortal being to find, and when found to bring home and harbour, the new knowledge and the new power to act. This way the Resurrection was a miracle, it was an event which 'opened the gate of everlasting life' and put into men's souls the desire to enter and the daring to press in. In what relation it stands to those laws of the natural universe which we have been able to formulate is a problem of high intellectual interest but of which the solution can be allowed to wait without much danger to our spiritual interests. But the theory we are here studying has to its credit that it rests itself on the conviction that nature and supernature are not two worlds but one; that the laws of fact ascertainable within the horizon of the sense-existence are part of a continuous and self-consistent system which comprises all within and all beyond that boundary; that

Heaven and earth are threads of the same loom,  
Play into one another, and weave the web

which is man's destiny as parcelled between the  
Here and the Hereafter.

By the side of this hypothesis how do they look, those other speculations by which we have sought to interpret the marvel? There is the hypothesis (for it is no more, though constructed out of the New Testament narrative) that the material body of Jesus was miraculously withdrawn from the tomb, reanimated, and miraculously endowed with functions not proper to flesh, as that of passage through solid matter, of vanishing and reappearing, of translation to the heavenly world. This hypothesis is not, as mine is, a *vera causa*. Among the verified facts of nature there is, one thinks, none like this. To many religious minds that may seem a recommendation, for it makes the Rising a miracle and therefore a sign of divine intervention. But then is a miracle necessary here? And if it is not, if, that is, the divine Power could produce the result by the use of existing resources, can we suppose a new instrumentality would be needlessly fabricated? Surely the Law of Parsimony is a law of the Most High in His economy of the worlds.

It is true this popular hypothesis of a 'physical resurrection' attempts to include the fact of the empty tomb, which is left outside my hypothesis. It explains the disappearance of the body by its appearance elsewhere. This explanation, however, has to meet the difficulty that the appearing body wholly differed in its action from the crucified, and it is hard to see how we are helped by this. For how can we think of it as really the same?



And if not, what became of the other? I offer no solution of the problem which the narrative presents as to what happened to the body, though my expectation is that it will be solved, if ever, by one of two alternatives: either the tradition was mistaken and the body was disposed of in some unknown but natural manner, or else the same creative power which had brought into being the mortal frame withdrew it into nothingness. If the latter is the fact, there would be to ask why such special intervention of Deity was needed? I do not know what other reason suggests itself than that the witnesses, in the then state of psychologic knowledge, would have found it harder to accept the assurance of Jesus, 'It is I Myself,' if they had been sure that all the while Jesus was lying a corpse in Joseph's vault. They might have still believed that they were seeing but a ghost. This speculation will probably not seem very substantial, but I put it forward as the only conjecture I am able myself to form.

Then there is the hypothesis of a self-generated illusion, the 'vision theory.' Illusion certainly is a *vera causa*, there are phantasms created by the vision-seer's mind. But no believer in the *permanent* effect of the Resurrection on mankind will prefer the theory of an unreal hallucination to my theory that there was a real presence of Christ to the witness, operated by the functions of sight and hearing.

And, again, there is the theory of a transformation of the physical body into a 'spiritual body.' In



the mouths of most people that is but the putting of a word for a thought. But at any rate this is no *vera causa*: Nature offers no example of such a transformation, whereas she gives broad and palpable indication of the cause I am rendering—the union of conscious beings without bodily contiguity. But further, see how my conception takes up into it and gives reality to that mere verbal notion of a ‘Spiritual body.’ For body, spiritual or physical, is only the means of intercourse and mutual action between a conscious being and his fellows. Between Christ and disciple this intercourse did take place, the means of it being the sight of His form and sound of His voice. The force in the person of Jesus which caused that sight and sound, *this* was the spiritual body by which He appeared and had the intercourse of the Forty Days.

This chapter must end with a clear restatement of the position taken up in it. I should get little justice for this interpretation of the Resurrection event, if it should be thought to rest on a foundation so narrow and of a soundness so much disputed as the still obscure and not measurable phenomena of telepathy, whether of the living or the dead. But my interpretation is based on a foundation not less wide or less deep than the base on which the great world is built; it is based on the law of Life. The life-process is the world-secret. All things live unto God by a vital union with Him, the self-interchange of part and whole, organism

and environment, creature and Creator. But of all living things within the kingdom of human kind the most alive is the soul; and the soul has its most of life not in the functionings of the material body but when its invisible, imponderable central self—that which we name consciousness, mind spirit, personality—has interchange and communion and mutual penetration with Another than Self which is like it, and therefore communicative and communicable. The new science of soul<sup>1</sup> is laying bare to view certain powers of communion and interchange belonging to the human spirit, at which hitherto we have made only such guesses as the belief in charms and ghosts, but which we begin now to understand are realities, are extensions and enhancements of the soul's vital faculties newly come into view and offering themselves for use.

Our doctrine of the Resurrection is that by this highest energy of life, the power of a consciousness to be present and act upon a distant consciousness without the aid of corporeal senses, Jesus *in His Manhood*, now freed from the mortal limitations, or, as we say, 'glorified,' was seen and heard of His disciples during the Forty Days, and by the same exercise of that Manhood's powers has in All the Days been present to His disciples in an intercourse of thought and act. These last have

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<sup>1</sup> Students of the phenomena of 'Suggestion' (as in Baudouin's recent work) will recognise a confirmation of my theory in the power of one man's consciousness to waken in others a consciousness which realises itself in an effect on the physical organism.

‘seen Jesus the Lord’ neither by sight nor sound, but by the experience that when they have essayed the interchange of their personal self with the Person of Jesus as made known to them by the tradition of the spiritual family, the Church in which they have been reared, then there has ensued life in all their frame of man. Thus the Christ has made good to them the promise, ‘I am the Life.’

How inadequate now, and almost I had said artificial, is the old theologic account of the Resurrection as the miracle which proved the divinity of Christ and accredited the apostleship of those who saw it. To have seen Jesus the Lord was no doubt the credential of an apostle, but how much more was it! If it was the proving of an apostle, far trulier was it the making of an apostle. It was the event for him as for all others by which he was born alive with the life unto Christ. For to see the Lord Jesus—it is toward this that we have been working from the first in this enquiry—to see Him as Peter, to hear Him as Paul, to feel Him as all later believers, this is the fact of Christianity. All else that we call our Christianity, the Creed, the Sacraments, the Ministry, the theory of the Church, the rule of life for society and the member, the right relations of Church to Church, of nation to nation, of class to class, all these must derive not finally from the page of scripture or the tradition of the Catholic Church, but from the very fountain-head, the Manhood of Jesus Christ making man to have the life in God,

## CHAPTER VII

### LIFE THE ORGANUM OF KNOWLEDGE

I HAVE said that the 'seeing of the Lord' by a Peter, a Paul, or any one of 'the multitude that believe,' is under all the differences in sensible circumstances always the same human experience; and that this experience is the fact of Christianity. For it is the supreme act of life for the soul of man, the act of interchange between all that is within us and all that is without, the mutual indwelling of the self of the man and that Other than Self, the Divine Reality which meets the mortal in the eternal Manhood of Jesus Christ.

But to speak so is to use an abstraction; and one not yet pregnant with application to the actualities of the religious existence. We cannot deduce the particulars of the Christian's spiritual fortune, his rule of belief and conduct, from the idea of the *Unio Mystica* in which the individual soul lives unto Christ. That is because man is no more an individual in religion than he is in nature. If in the fleshly existence man is by the Greek definition a 'city-needing creature,' so too is he in the spiritual. Natural man comes into being and is kept in being by a family which

begets, nurtures, and protects him. Man as a spirit comes to birth and is sustained and advanced by the family called the Church: the community of the faithful is the city of the soul. And even as in the natural existence there is a greater than the Family, the Race or the whole of Nature, and the existence of both family and member depends on a vital association of each of them with that Whole, so too in the spiritual sphere the Church and the single soul must live each to the other and both of them to the encompassing Reality, the Person of Christ. Not the *Unio Mystica* then is the fact of Christianity, but the *Communio Mystica*, the vital interchange between not two selves but three, the triune communion in which the life which passes between Church and Soul is one inseparable action with a life which beats from Christ to both. This is but to say in dry analytic language what St. John in more human and moving form pronounces, when he writes that he who would love God must love his brother also. Again it is to endorse that maxim which has often had so harsh a meaning on churchmen's lips, *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*; for in the same sense in which we can say 'Without the family there can be no child,' we must say 'Without the Church no Soul can be born and live.'

Here then we have the true and full fact of Christianity. It is this *Communio Mystica*, the threefold self-interchange, the circuit of life through the Christ, the Church, the Soul. Out of this

fact must flow all knowledge and all action in the things of religion. If we would learn whether a creed is true or an institution salutary, we must learn whether to believe the doctrine and to adopt the rite makes the life of the threefold communion in the body of the Church and in its members severally. This is the canon of judgment, and the method of research.

When the scholastic philosophy of the Middle Ages was superseded by the science which in England we associate with the name of Bacon, the system of physical enquiry was called a *Novum Organum*, a new instrument. Enough of the defect of scholasticism, that of substituting names for things, attaches to our hitherto philosophy of religion to make us desire a new instrument of right thinking and fresh discovery. May it be ventured without incurring reproach for disrespect toward our Church's theologic past to claim consideration for this canon of judgment and method of research—the test of Life?

We hasten to disclaim for it, however, the name of *Novum Organum*, because this method, so far from being new, is the oldest of methods and one that never has been out of use. Since faith began, nay, since human life began, man's instrument of knowledge always was the experiment of Life. As in the nourishment and care of the body man chose the good and refused the evil by the test that this food or exercise made for life and that other made for death, so in the care of his spiritual

being he believed and practised the things which he found to nourish his mind and energise his will. The Creed of Nicaea is confessed among us at the close of seventeen centuries not because three hundred bishops promulgated it but because the body of the faithful accorded the *assensus populi*. They found on trial that to think of Christ as Athanasius thought was 'a better light on the mortal's path and a sounder strength for his journey than to hold opinion with Arius. Contrariwise we are now resigning the general use of the Quicunque because the truths it carries are conveyed in a form not apt for their assimilation by the general. Again the Supper of the Lord has maintained or after lapse unfailingly recovered its power because the Body and Blood are meat indeed and drink indeed and they that receive have had life by the receiving. Similarly those on whom the sacramental system lays no hold are drawn in another direction by the same self-preservative instinct. 'How do you recruit your members?' I asked an Elder in a certain queer-named religious community in a southern county. 'For I notice that you discountenance marriage and your young people are few.' He replied: 'People come to our services and tell us they find here what they were seeking : so they join us.' Right or wrong, they choose a mode of worship because they think it ministers to them life.

Will it be objected that our creeds are the gift of the Bible and our ordinances the gift of the



Church? That to base them on the experience of Christians is a resort to private judgment and a return to chaos? But neither Bible nor Church is a fountain-head of truth. They are two channels, if indeed they are two, along which passes the river of the water of life which issues from under the throne of the Lamb, and we have to use our judgment, not the private but *the private and the communal* judgment, to know whether what passes is water of life. For is all that the Bible brings us life-giving? There are pages of the Old Testament which we turn unread because to read would cause a blush at an indecency or a qualm at a horror; and many more that are innocent but of no worth. And is the Church always a mother that nourishes her children only with the pure milk of a divine word? Not the hardy Infallibilist will say it. We interpret and revise them both, and the critical instrument we use is the discrimination of the life-giving from the lifeless in the script or the ordinance. And how do we discriminate? We make experiment and watch to see whether life results to the community and the single soul from this scripture or that rule. Thus, we used to account all the Bible to be Holy Writ, but have found that Leviticus does not nourish the Christian mind, and certain tales in the Pentateuch are even poisonous reading for the young. They do not edify, we say; we mean they do not build up the life of soul. And there is no need to illustrate the discrimination we practise between ecclesiastic



customs which are salutary and those which have lost their helpfulness.

Always, however, the discretion which is to discern the healthful and unwholesome is the wisdom not of the individual nor yet of the Church without him, but the wisdom that is generated by the conference of both in commune with the mind of Christ. *That communion is the organum of truth.*

Still it will be objected that this test of life may be the finest instrument of judgment in religious questions, but it is *too* fine for use ; that the spiritual life is a thing invisible and impalpable providing no definite standard by which a doctrine or a use can be measured. The *litera scripta* of the Bible does, it is said, provide such a test, a rough one but a usable ; and so does the Vincentian canon of catholicity, *Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est* ; for you can know how long a truth has been believed and by how many, but who shall say with any confidence that an access of life has come to a church or a member of it from the adoption of a belief or a practice ?

I have somewhat answered this by anticipation. The criterion of Life is, I have pointed out, the test which men have always used ; a creed or institution is adopted and maintained because men experience religious help from the use of it. If that answer does not satisfy, I point out that the presence or absence of life is a thing we are able to verify. A man knows for certain that he

is alive in his bodily organism: he may find it hard to describe the evidence, which is the sensation of ease and vigour in his physical organs, but the life in him is self-evident to himself. It is also provable to others, by the external signs of health, such as the power to breathe and move. But the life of a man is one as the man himself is one, life of his body and life of his spirit. It is impossible one should be doubtful or at least remain in doubt whether one is alive in soul or no. A Church is in the same case, with the difference only which there is in the workings of the personal and of the corporate consciousness. The man knows at once or soon whether his soul has life from a thinking or a doing: the wider mind of the Church takes more time to realise the effect, but in the degree of its self-consciousness it does realise the resultant life; and that life is provable to others by the outward signs of moral and spiritual fruitfulness, though here again the proof takes more time, the life-history of a church being longer than the man's.

Then, as for Vincent's canon, can it, in the naked literality of its terms, be used at all? What is the article of the faith which has ever been believed "everywhere, always, and by all"? In that guise one cannot in the actual facts of Christendom present it without irony. Yet the canon is right if we will translate it rightly, and such translation I shall venture to offer.

It is, I believe, no paradox if I claim Vincent of Lerinum as a witness to my own formula that a

doctrine is true and to be accepted by the Church if it makes life in the body of the Church and in its members particularly. Vincent meant by his *Ubique* 'everywhere in Christendom,' and by *Semper*, 'always up to his own time,' four centuries. By *ab omnibus* (which looks at first sight like a tautology, for, if a thing is believed everywhere and always, why add that it is believed by all men?) he meant surely this: A belief might be held always, and universality in time be claimed for it; but there might be times when it was held feebly and by few. And it might be held everywhere, and universality in space be predicated; but the belief might be spread very thin, a mere film covering the surface of Everywhere but not going below the surface. That is not enough for Vincent. Not all our Christendom must hold it, but all estates and conditions of Christians there, laymen and priests, doctors and simple. The faith must not only have length of time and breadth of space, but also have depth, which means solidity; must be not a superficies but a cube. This solidity he expresses in the language of quantity by saying the faith must have been believed 'by all,' from the learned at the top to the unlearned of the lowest stratum.

Now these dimensions of belief—length, breadth, depth, are not they dimensions by which we can measure Life? We will help our conception of this by an analogy from the physical existence. A drowning man is rescued from the water with

animation suspended. The rescuers apply resuscitative methods and bring about respiration and presently full revival. How do they know that he is coming alive? They find the lungs go on breathing after they have ceased handling the body ; that all other organs are functioning again ; life not only persists in part of the body, it is spreading everywhere in it. What more ? The man gets fully and firmly alive ; the lungs not only breathe, but breathe deeply, the heart not only beats, but beats with strength. That is, the three signs of life in the man's organism are its extension in time, its extension in space, and its intensity of degree. If living, breathing things can be described in figures drawn from mathematics, we might say that life has length and breadth and depth.

This description may serve as a diagram to illustrate the mensuration of life in the soul. A belief can be known to be life-giving, if first it has permanence, is undecayed by time, and undislodged by other interests ; if next it permeates and unifies the whole consciousness of the man, interpreting all regions of his thought and systematising all provinces of his will ; and last, if with this persistence and pervasiveness it has also depth, weight, pressure, exerting a drastic influence on the intellectual and the practical faculties, convincing the mind so that it can think no other, constraining the will so that it can do no other.

This analysis of the action of life in the consciousness of the individual must be a figure of the parallel

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experience in the corporate consciousness. The evidences of a life received by a Church from the belief it entertains will be the tenacity of the community's assurance, its penetration of all fields of the society's speculation and activity, and the moral and mental energy it promotes. The history of the past must produce each evidence, but it must be a history which includes in its witness the present movement and there too bears a testimony that does not hesitate.

Now these are as a fact the evidence by which we habitually measure the reality of a faith. From Vincent of Lerins onward the Church has defended its creed by asserting that it has safeguarded for all the centuries the entrusted truths ; that wherever the religion has spread these truths have been carried with it ; and that the efficacy of the faith has been shown by the advancement in intelligence and conduct of the races to which it has been introduced. This is nothing else than Vincent's *Ubique, Semper, ab Omnibus*. I submit that in proposing to assess the values of faith by the measurement of life in its length, breadth, and depth we are republishing the ancient catholic canon in a form more strictly logical than the original and one more apt for application to the religion of our day.

But always we must come back to this : we are to prove the truth of doctrine and the bindingness of rule by the test of a life generated in us when we question them *in the triune communion*, where Church

and member live the one unto the other through a life which both have unto the Christ. But this Christ of the triune fellowship is Jesus, who communes with them by an exercise of the powers of His abiding Manhood. It is with a counsellor who is human, though of a humanity infinite and therefore divine, that this consultation is. Such a monitor can understand and be understood by the human seeker of counsel. With him that mortal in the divine-human colloquy can hold the dialectic which genders truth between minds diverse and unequal yet akin, and capable thereby of a mutuality of thought. But such mutuality who could dare to hope between man in the flesh and Him who is in highest heaven? His thoughts are not our thoughts, and our goods are nothing unto Him. But where meet together the two or three whose gathering makes a presence in that place of the Christian fellowship, there comes and stands in the midst Jesus, the Man who is one with God. He knows our human thoughts because He reads them, nay, thinks them for us in our bosom; and He knows, what we cannot, all the elements of a true decision, 'the hidden things of darkness, the counsels of men's hearts,' and the 'coming things' of the future veiled from eyes of flesh. That is why we are sure that the Church in council, 'judging nothing before the time until the Lord come,' will find the judgment which is right. That is why the Triune Communion is the instrument of sacred knowledge, the *Organum Scientiæ Scientiarum*.

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Shall I seem to anyone to be trespassing on the Church's doctrine of the Holy Spirit whom in our creed and worship we invoke to bring us the right judgment in all things? Do we set Him aside when we thus invoke the Manhood of Christ? It is an objection I am certain to encounter, and must try to forestall.

It must be acknowledged that the part I have attributed to the action upon men of the Manhood of Christ does displace something that has been in the vision of Churchmen when they make the confession, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost . . . who spake by the prophets,' and of whom Jesus Himself is reported to have said, 'He shall teach you all things' and 'I will send Him from the Father.' But it does not displace that companion word 'I will come to you,' or the earlier promise, 'Where two or three are gathered there am I.' Weigh the one word against the other, and which is the weightier?

If this does not satisfy, and the Person of the Third in the Trinity seems to be ignored in my reasoning, I must recall the distinction which I emphasised at the start of my enquiry between truths of experience and truths of metaphysic. The doctrine of the Third Person belongs to metaphysic, the doctrine of the Manhood of Christ to experience. Now truth of experience must by inalienable right take precedence in its claim on our faith of the other truth. If there should seem to be any clash between the doctrines, it is the



metaphysical that must make adjustment to the experiential, our conception of the Spirit must accommodate itself to that of the Christ.

But to those who are 'very jealous' for the honour of the Lord and Giver of Life I can make a yet more acceptable answer. How do we know anything of the Holy Spirit, beyond the knowledge of Him common to us and to pre-Christian men to whom He spoke by the prophets, except through the testimony of Jesus in His still mortal Manhood and the witness of His disciples whose experience has confirmed that testimony? It is the Manhood of Christ that reveals the Spirit, even as it is the Word Incarnate seen, heard, and handled by those who knew Christ in the flesh that reveals the Father. What we know of the Godhead of the Father and of the Holy Ghost we have learnt and are learning still from Christ the Man. I seem then to hear the living Christ make answer to our questionings as He made it on that night to one who cried, 'Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us.' For will not Jesus say to these unsatisfied ones, 'Have I been so long with thee, these two thousand years, and hast thou not known Me, Christian? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Spirit.'

'Hast thou not known Me, Christian?' There lies the answer to the jealousy for the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. The answer is that Christ can be known. We can know the Spirit of God but as Isaiah knew Him when He spoke through His purged lips, as Ezekiel knew Him when rapt into



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fields of vision. Christ we know as Peter knew his Master, Jesus, as John the beloved knew his soul's Lover. What does the believer lose of comfort, what does he not rather gain, if that of his dependence on the Divine which was the comfort of the Spirit, equal to God the Infinite as touching his Godhead, is transferred to the Christ who is equal also to man in his finiteness as touching His Manhood taken into God?

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE POWER OF THE MANHOOD UPON A MAN

'THEY went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak the word in Asia ; and when they were come over against Mysia, they essayed to go into Bithynia ; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not.' <sup>1</sup>

Three travellers are halted at a crossways in Anatolia to choose their course. Shall it be westward to the Mediterranean or northward to the Black Sea ? There is a Fourth in the group, not a figure, nor a shadow, yet a Companion. For a moment there is hesitation ; then the leader is turning to the north. An unseen hand is laid on his breast and stays him. Not this way then. He turns again and sets his face to Troas and the peoples of the west.

The travel story of Paul and Silas, Apostles, and Timothy their deacon, steered by viewless, wordless pilotage toward the unnamed land which God will show them, is a Mystery Play dramatising a movement in world religion. They had purposed

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<sup>1</sup> Acts xvi. 6, 7.

to evangelise Roman Asia, but a Guide had forbidden them: it was the Spirit of God. They make Bithynia their goal. Again they are steered elsewhere: but now that which marshals their march is the *Spirit of Jesus*.

The phrase has authenticity. One hears Paul's voice in it as he talks in the inn chamber at Troas to Luke, a man of Macedonia. His listener is all ear to the prophet-adventurer with whom he is pleading for a mission to his own countrymen. 'So then it was the Spirit of Jesus who spoke yesterday to this traveller at the doubtful cross-roads.' He treasures the word and has sent it down to us. It was lost to our version of Luke's story till just of late our scholars have recovered it from the better text of the Acts. And meanwhile the successors of Paul, on the errands of Christ or in the adventure of their own career, when they have hung indeterminate at a crossway, have told us how there came to them a Spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, but have called this counsellor the 'Holy Ghost,' not 'the Spirit of Jesus.' The theological centuries have carried the Church a long way from the mind of its beginners, but the deeper and wider second thoughts of the Councils and their creeds must let us return with the riches of the trinitarian doctrine in our hand to the Church's first thought, and make of it the 'third thought which is a riper first.' He who forbade 'Asia' to Paul and suffered him not to go into Bithynia was indeed the Holy Ghost,

but also—resolve how we may our doctrinal perplexity—He was Jesus, the Man who had been crucified but whom this Paul affirmed to be alive.

What Paul affirmed had been the affirmation of those who were in Christ before him. The first thought of the little fellowship was that it was He Himself, Jesus of Nazareth their Master, whom they saw and heard in the Forty Days ; that He was one who could walk with disciples and talk even as in his teacher days on a road to Emmaus or to Bethany or on the lake-shore of Bethsaida. It was a first thought not expelled by the revelation of Pentecost. It was still Jesus who ‘shed forth this,’ the power which made their company to be the Church of God : it was against ‘God’s holy *servant* Jesus’ that Gentile and Israelite had been gathered together, and the signs and wonders were being done by the name of that holy servant Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

That first thought was never quite forsaken. Christians all down the centuries have known the Companion and Guide of their life-travel as Peter and as Paul knew Him. The devout metaphysic of Nicaea and all the Doctors, the philosophy of an Aquinas, the theodicy of a Milton, have not weaned the workaday believer from the instinct which yearns for a Redeemer who is a Person ; a Person not after the manner of a member of the Trinity in Unity, but as the man himself who yearns is a

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<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 27, 30.

personal being, a Jesus who is alive even as his worshipper is alive. The Roman cult of the Madonna is a reprisal taken by the multitude for the inhuman abstractness of a dogmatic Christology: the unwholesome and almost erotic emotionalism which some other religionists have directed towards the divine 'Lover of my Soul' is a perversion into which they have been warped by the unsatisfied craving for an answer from a human heart to a heart: and when a pietist has told me that he has 'seen the Lord' in visible form, I have said to myself that this can truly have been, for the Humanity of Jesus in contact with a disciple of simple and unphilosophised belief might well work conviction of His presence through even such a reaction of the sensuous being as that which worked in the first witnesses the recognition by sight and hearing of their Lord.

Our Gospel of the Manhood offers to satisfy this universal instinct of the *anima naturaliter Christiana*, its craving not for a Christianity but a Christ, and not for a Christ only but for a 'Man Christ Jesus.' For what it presents is a Saviour of human kind who, however He be mysteriously related to the divine sum of things, is related intelligibly and sensibly to every man singly as a Person whose personality has all the characters and the faculties which make up his own, but has with these an infinity of capacity and of opportunity to employ them wheresoever in the world of men He finds a soul that will respond to

His touch. That touch and the response to it are a purely human fact: they are an act of human life, but of human life lived at its highest, for it brings man's personality across the bound of the sensible existence and makes it live a life in the supra-sensible, a life which has potentially a progressive extension into the infinite. For in that reciprocation there passes from the Christ to the mortal brother the thought and will, the knowledge and the action, which are the vital relations uniting Jesus to the Final Reality, named by him God the Father. There comes to him that mind of Christ. It comes to this mortal by a law of fact which in the sphere of Nature is the cause of life to all creatures that live, the law of self-interchange between the creaturely self and the creative. But our Gospel of the Manhood not only tells him that there is this impartment of a life from the Christ to the mortal: it also tells him by what process the life is imparted. It is a certain mode of the vital self-interchange which we must judge to be the highest known to us in spiritual value, that by which the intellectual and moral forces of one personal being can unite themselves with the same forces in another in a process for which we have coined the inadequate names of Telepathy and Thought-transference. Since the process is not simple transmission but a mutual intromission, we might coin the closer-fitting name of Thought-conference, the bringing together of a mind and a mind. By this Thought-conference, then, a human

process, man attains this life unto Reality, which is the fulfilment of his destiny, the 'saving of the soul.' The measure in which he attains this life, the degree in which his nature penetrates and is penetrated by the nature of that Reality, is the degree in which he is saved. But in whatever degree he attains salvation, the way of attainment is by the vital union of the believer's person with that which is human-personal in Christ.

The faith of the Christian of to-day is not indeed that narrow exclusive faith of earlier Christians who believed that they believed that to confess their creed was the one only means of salvation ; but he does hold that this intercourse of man with the Manhood of Christ is the most potent and the surest means to bring the human creature out from the fleshly condition, which must for all flesh end in death, into the union of thought and will with his Creator which is life eternal. ' There is none other name under heaven,' we pray in the death-shadowed chamber, ' given unto man in whom and through whom we may receive health and salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' No other *name* : for in the logic of religion only realities can truly have a name, and the only true realities are Persons. By the Person of Jesus are we saved ; and this is the way of the salvation—the interchange of our self and His, the human and the Human.

That is the faith of the Christian as I am able to

understand and hold it. How do we prove it true?

It has been claimed here that the test of a truth is the power of that truth to make life in the man who accepts and uses it. This was to be our Organum Scientiæ. That instrument then must be tried upon this truth of truths, that the Manhood of Jesus is the cause of life to man. Believing this, do we have life?

Life can be judged of fully only by the man who lives it. Each Christian must apply the test for himself, and can convince only himself that the experiment has issued in life to him. For the experience of being alive can be only his own, and it is incommunicable. But the whole congregation of Christian people have made the prolonged experiment which we call the history of the faith; and the fact that the Church has lived all that time and is living now, and is confident of living on, is to the Church's corporate mind the evidence of the efficacy of her belief. But this corporate experience, too, is incommunicable to those without.

Yet if we try to judge not by experience but on *a priori* grounds, as it were from the view-point of an onlooker, we can take some measure of the effect the doctrine can work on human character. It is great, both in word and in power.

In word it is great: it is convincing, that is, to the reason. For it presents Christianity as a body



of truths which are continuous with and consistent with all other truths which concern man's existence. Far too much have our systems of theology seemed to the multitude to be, if not contradictory of the instincts and the reason of ordinary minds, yet at any rate to be out of practical relation to them. The life religious has been thought of as standing to the life natural much as a miracle stands to the uniformity of the laws of matter. There was, it was supposed, the spiritual order and there was the temporal order; these were two disconnected worlds in which man's existence moved, of which one is well known to him and of direct and urgent importance, while the other, though of a value incomparably higher if only it be real, is of a reality that is not near and cogent but can be doubted and even denied.

It is otherwise with this doctrine of the Abiding Manhood of the 'Man Christ Jesus.' It makes our knowledge of things temporal and of things eternal to be a whole of knowledge. Life, which is the world-secret, is one same fact from lowest herb to highest soul of man. It is the process of creation in its two stages of nature and supernature; and that process was not interrupted by the event of Christ but was stirred, quickened, and impelled by it towards a due fulfilment. The Christ claimed to be the Life, and the Life He is seen to be, not in a figure but in literality, not in a mystery but in open fact, not by analogy to nature's life but by identity with it. There in the centre of the

immeasurable web of individual human consciousnesses is the human consciousness of Jesus of Nazareth, like a sun on which a world of stars is centred, radiating the light and warmth of His being through every live thread of intercourse along which their vibrations can pass to any soul that will receive and return them. And this radiation which quickens transitory men into a deathless life is but the self-same action of the Divine Maker of all things as our senses can trace when we watch a flower unfold or in our own body feel a muscle spring or a lung expand.

A Gospel is great in word if it can make our knowledge of things to be a whole of knowledge. For it is not the born and trained philosopher only who craves this wholeness of his thoughts; the simple and unlearned, who has not ability to frame a system of his thinkings, is philosopher enough at least to be *unable* to think a doctrine which cannot make its way into the little circle of ideas which is his narrow knowledge of the world he has to live in. He must be at home in his universe, the minute universe which is the house of his consciousness, and of that house his conception of the Divine is the penetralia, where he can least endure to be a stranger.

But if this Gospel is in word and commends itself to the intelligence, how much more is it 'in power' and lays constraint upon the will?

He with whom we have to do, He who can make

or leave unmade the fortune of our personal being, He through whose personal being lies a way for our spirit to union with the All-Spirit—is a Man. (Our fellow-religionists fear perhaps to say this, because they think that to acknowledge Christ as Very Man is to unsay—which is not so—the belief that He is Very God.) It is with a Man that we have to do. Then under what a constraint of awe and fear shall we do or leave undone the actions which make the moral occasions and opportunities of our life-course! If there are temptations which we repel because a friend, whose judgment we reverence, would hold us guilty if we yield, how will the dread of this Friend's censure stay our hand and foot and fetter our tongue and rebuke even our unuttered desire! For this Man was able to read the thoughts of men while He was their fellow in the flesh; then more surely He reads them now, for His human heart is not gone from Him, but contrariwise has widened to the compass of all human hearts. With what fear, then, shall we act, but also with what hope! For here is the Comrade who in an hour of venture can nerve us with the brother soldier's touch, and

. . . almost seem to fold  
An arm in mine to fix me to the place

where the ordeal must be endured or dared.

This is the power of the Manhood upon our manhood while we are men for the space of this tarriance in the flesh. But how when that tarriance ends?

## Power of the Manhood upon a Man 99

When Abraham was called forth by night to look on the stars of heaven it was to receive from that spectacle a message of hope: 'as the stars are for multitude so shall thy seed be.' But Abraham did not know, as we have come to know, what is the multitude of the stars.

A while ago a new luminary was detected by the astronomers' night-watch. It grew brighter for some days, then waned and died into darkness. It meant, the astronomers thought, a conflagration in which a sun, larger perhaps than ours, of a remote stellar system had through a clash with a giant shoal of meteors blazed up and burnt down in ashes. This enormous occurrence had been for man on his planet only the brief flicker of a spark of light caught on the lens of a telescope. Such are the distances of the worlds which, says the creed, God made through His Son. And that Son is Jesus Christ.

What terms of thought and feeling can we hold with such an One? Only those which man can hold with God Himself, the Infinite. This God-head of the Christ, if it is to be thought of only thus—how can we link our single human spirit's interest with this? In His making of the infinite universe, of which for all we know every star may be the home of its own mankind, what proportion can be held by the making of the soul of one of us infinitesimals? What, indeed!

Therefore will we lay hold on that which can be known of Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary, Saviour of

the little world that is ours. The Abiding Manhood of the Son of Man, the power of His Manhood to save our soul alive, to this we cling as a child frightened in a vasty dark clings to the warm hand of a mother. In the appalling vacancy, or (if so it be) in the appalling populousness, of a universe of which a beginning and an unbeginning, an end and an endlessness, are alike unimaginable, here and here only is

the countercharm of space and hollow sky,

that in that vast and void there abides One like ourself, human, but one whom Time cannot outwear, Space cannot engulf ; that in the hour when each of us 'alone withouten any companie,' must launch into that emptiness, yet the deep of All-Being will not drown us. Even there shall a hand of Man lead us and His right hand hold our soul in life.

## PART II



## CHAPTER IX

### THE RECONSTRUCTION OF A CHURCH

#### *I.—Creed*

THEORIES, like prophets, are known by their fruits. This Gospel of the Manhood can only make itself known for true prophecy by its fruitfulness in solving the problems of the religious life. Let it be put to that test. The problems at this time which the Church of Christ in this country, and most responsibly the branch of which the truest name is 'the Church of the English people,' are those which belong to the threefold task of Reconstruction, Reunion, and Re-evangelisation. Will the Gospel of the Manhood minister power to remodel the social organism of the nation's church, and contradict the maxim that 'a Church can never reform itself'? Will it bind the spell that re-knits the fellowship of the estranged communions? Will it draw into that fellowship the multitude who at present are, or think they are, aliens from the commonwealth of the Spirit?

#### RECONSTRUCTION

It is to Reconstruction that we must first address the enquiry. Of the many problems covered by



that name we must choose some one only for the application of the test, and let that experiment exemplify the value of our instrument of judgment. This instrument, which we have asked to be allowed in a Baconian technicality to call the *Vetus-Novum Organum* of the science of sciences, is the method which measures the truth of a doctrine or the usefulness of a rule by the spiritual life resultant to those who believe the one or practise the other. And by this spiritual life shall be meant the life which comes to man from his interchange of self with the Self of Jesus in His Abiding Manhood.

Of the three functions of the sacred organism—the ministry of the Word, the Sacraments, the Discipline—it will be found that the first is the best adapted for an illustrative experiment of our method in the problem of Reconstruction, the second in that of Reunion, the third in the last problem, that of an Evangel to the Many.

The Ministry then of the Word.

How can the Church as Thinker be reconstructed? Can it revise a Creed, when an article is disputed?

But first, What is Creed, and what is it to believe? Do we know?

It is generally taken for granted that we do. An article is challenged by a critic, as recently that of the *Virgin Birth*. The defenders, including persons in positions of authority, assume that the critic is a disbeliever in the article because he doubts or denies that the fact asserted is a fact

of history. To deny the Virgin Birth is taken as parallel in theology to the denial in history, say, of the signing of Magna Carta. But there is no parallelism. To deny Magna Carta is to think the incident at Runnymede did not happen ; this is a historical judgment. To deny the credal article is to think that the Mother of Jesus was not virgin ; this, too, is a historical judgment. But, if it be no more than that, it is not a religious judgment, is not an act of faith, is not an act within the purpose of the creed, has no bearing on the spiritual fortune of the disbeliever.

What, then, is it to believe when belief is a religious judgment, an act of faith, with consequences on the believer's fate ?

To believe is to be united in mind and will to the Reality, to have the life unto God, to be a subject of the mutual Indwelling. That union is a oneness of the believer's thought with God's thought, of the believer's action with the divine action ; it is to mirror the world-fact on the mind's eye, to co-operate with the world-movement by the motions of heart and hand.

What, then, is it to believe the article, ' Born of the Virgin Mary ' ? One can indeed reflect the physical occurrence of a parthenogenesis on the mirror of the mind, but how can one enact it by the forces of the will ? We cannot re-enact the signing of the English Charter, nor can we repeat in our practical activities the coming of the Child in the Bethlehem stable. To confess the virginity

of Mary of Nazareth as an act of religious belief is a motion of the soul differing from the acknowledgment of the physical event of the birth not in degree but in kind.

And the least clear-thinking confessor of the Creed knows, when pressed to think, what the thing really is which he confesses in those words. He would tell us that if Mary was virgin, Christ was sinless, for the entail of sin was thus cut off, and that on this sinlessness our hopes are built. Nay, but he must build deeper than so. Not that Christ was without sin makes our salvation, but that Christ had wholly and perfectly and indefectibly the life unto God. And not even this is a religious belief unless to the confession that this one Man Jesus was alive unto God it can be added that He is able to make others alive as He is. The Incarnation becomes a matter of faith only if the fact is one which affects our human fate, that is, if it is the existence of a force in the world of things by which a man can have the life unto God and save his soul alive. With such a doctrine of the Incarnation—that Jesus was from the first, from the moment of birth and even of conception, a man wholly alive unto God, and able to communicate that life—with this assertion of a reality a believer can identify himself with *all* his soul, with the thinker in him and the doer in him at once. For he can 'let that mind be in him which was' and is in Jesus, and so can become, according to the degree of his religious consciousness, what

Jesus was and is in His thoughts, one who has the mind of the All-Being, who knows things as God knows them. But also he can endeavour to let that will be in him which was and is in Christ, and the work that Christ did and does he can try to do, to serve as Jesus served the purpose of the Divine Reality, to live by the exercise of his practical faculties the life unto the Father—that life which Jesus communicates from Himself to His disciple by the mystic self-interchange and thought-conference of spirit and spirit, of the man in the flesh and the Man within the Person of the Christ.

This being the nature of the act of believing in an article of a creed, how shall we test the credal assertion of an abnormal birth of the Saviour in order to know whether it is an essential element in the Christian faith, and whether it should be reshaped or reaffirmed, or neither one nor other but reinterpreted?

Now, since the historic incident, as *only* historic has no relation to faith, the article is not of religious value unless the physical fact of a virgin birth is essential to the sinlessness of Jesus, or rather to His life unto God. It has been considered to be so because it was thought that in a birth from a virgin-mother the entail of sin was cut off. To this it has been answered that the sinful nature of the *mother* would still be transmitted and so the birth not be sinless. [In the Roman Church the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was fabricated to meet this difficulty by asserting a sinless birth of

Mary.] This objection, that the sinful inheritance would pass from the mother, seemed to myself valid, till I remembered that modern physiology recognises that in normal generation the maternal element is as necessary as the paternal to the creation of an offspring, and there is no seed of life till the two elements unite. From this I should reason that if a child was born from the one parent only, the transmission of the heritage of sin would not happen. For in this parent apart from the other there would be no germ from which a new creature could be developed. A new individual can begin only in a union of the complementary male and female elements; only by such union can an inheritance either of evil or good pass from parent to offspring. If, then, the origin of Jesus was a virgin birth He did not originate in a germ which was human or even living, but in a physical element *which by a special act of creative power was made to be alive and human.* A new Humanity, sinless at the stage of its entry on the world, came into being: by a miracle 'the holy thing' was born of Mary. The necessity of a virgin birth seemed to me at first sight to be reaffirmed by this consideration.

Yet on second thoughts the necessity gives way again. If the creative power could cause a non-human and non-living thing to become a living soul, could it not as surely make a naturally engendered creature to have the life unto God and therefore be sinless. This would equally be a

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miracle, and equally effective of that sinless humanity which faith in the Redeemer of mankind requires for its assurance.

But if this miracle would equally with the other serve the divine purpose of creating a man without sin, does not the law of parsimony incline us to expect that God would not introduce a fresh instrumentality—the *generatio ex nihilo* of the New Man—if the same effect could be wrought by the existing instrument, a normal generation. It is no doubt presumptuous to assume that what is reasonable in our human logic is reasonable in the divine, but our reason is the best we have, is God's gift, and therefore is to be used, though with humble reserve of assuredness.

To this argument it will be objected that a man normally born could not be *known* to be the miracle of a sinless nature, whereas the abnormality of a virgin birth was a visible miracle and therefore evidence of divine intervention. As a fact, however, it has not been the wonder of the birth which caused belief in the wonder of the Christ, but on the contrary the wondrousness of the end of Jesus has induced not indeed the belief itself but yet the confidence of belief in the wonderfulness of the beginning, for which the bare historic evidence is not an adequate support.

Now, whichever of these alternatives is preferred—a miracle which created Jesus from no germ of human life at all, and a miracle which transmuted a sin-charged human germ into the germ of a perfect



humanity—can we (for this is our present subject) prove either alternative *by our organum*, the test of life? The evidence of history admittedly falls short of convincing us: does the evidence which can be obtained by this other instrument of knowledge procure conviction?

No believer, surely, will contend that he receives life, or, as he would likelier word it, derives faith, from the miracle, whichever it be, of the birth *except so far as the miracle assures him of the perfect holiness of Jesus*; assures him, that is, of the Incarnation. But out of the belief that Jesus Christ is the Incarnate One, in whom human and divine become one life together, able therefore as giver of life to free the man from sin of thought and deed—out of this, he acknowledges, flows the life which beats in his very being's mind and will. Then, by the criterion of life received from the belief, on the one hand the truth of the Incarnation is established, and on the other the *manner* of the Incarnate's fleshly birth is neither proved nor disproved, but is left on one side as a thing which does not bear on a man's spiritual fate.

How, one asks, do those who judge that a fellow-Churchman breaks communion with their fellowship if he should deny 'any of the historic facts' named in the Creed, and therefore the birth of Christ from a virgin mother—how do they meet this reasoning by which it appears that the *manner* of the birth is indifferent to faith?

They can meet it in one way only. That is by

## The Reconstruction of a Church III

guarding more carefully than has been done the demand for confession of 'the historic facts.' Brothers of our communion are indeed pledged to confess 'any historic fact' *if it is inseparably one with the spiritual fact of which it is the physical correspondent and concomitant.* Let those who denounce a brother for questioning a historic fact in the Creed first prove this inseparableness and then go and be at variance with their brother.

The need of observing this distinction will give pause to the too-ready zeal of some among us who hasten to declare themselves on the side of the Lord against His adversaries before they have clearly seen on which side of this issue the Lord Jesus stands Himself and on which side therefore stand His adversaries.

We have chosen for illustration of the working of our organum a crucial instance, but we will add a more crucial: the article which asserts the Resurrection. It has been supposed that in the clause, 'The third day He rose again from the dead,' the Creed affirms a reanimation of the fleshly body crucified. This it plainly does not. The Creed says nothing about the body with which Christ rose. Not even the scripture tells us that the crucified body was raised: that is merely an inference from the fact that the tomb was empty, and that the appearance of Jesus in the Upper Room resembled in feature and limb the appearance of Jesus when in the flesh. The inference was



natural for men neither scientific nor philosophic ; but is it an inference we can accept to-day ?

I will not repeat here the conjecture earlier offered by me (Chapters V. and VI.) of the nature of the occurrences during the Forty Days. Here we have only to ask, Tried by the criterion of life unto Christ received from the belief, is the resuscitation of the crucified limbs of Jesus proved or disproved or left neither capable of proof nor disproof ?

What Christian will tell us that his faith in the Risen Christ, his experience of a power upon his soul from that faith, is quickened more by his believing in a physical than in a personal resurrection, *except only in this way*—that the survival of the body would better convince him that the survival of Jesus was *real* ? There lies the truth of this matter. The man wants a resurrection which is real. Most disciples are like Thomas : they think only bodily things are real things, quite certainly real. Thomas learnt that the *Consciousness* of Jesus, That in Him which thinks and acts, the Person, as we call it, is the reality of Him, and not the hands and feet and side. These disciples who are of the mind of Thomas must learn what he learnt, that the Consciousness, the Personality, the Self is the man, and the body is but the person come to speech with his fellow-men and needing as means of intercourse to be seen, heard, and recognised for who and what he is.

‘Behold My hands and My feet . . . that it is I Myself.’

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Which kind of recognition is for our souls to-day 'the *power* of the resurrection'? Is it that which notes the scars in hand and side, or that which sees that this is Jesus, He Himself, who liveth and was dead and behold He is alive for evermore?

Or once more let us turn the edge of our instrument upon the 'Ascended into heaven.' For not long ago we were hearing an eminent Churchman charged with heresy because, it seems, he taught that the Ascension was not a corporeal but a spiritual event. Now the obvious logical difficulties of the conception that the Body of the Tomb passed into the heavens are not here our concern; and indeed mere reverence would in any case forbid our imagination to figure out such an occurrence. But where, one asks, is the Christian whose faith is encouraged by the idea of a bodily translation? and whose faith is *not* confirmed by the knowledge that He who in the past was finite man has entered the divine Infinite, and now in that Infinite there dwells One who is human still?

We will not pursue this enquiry into the practical question of how the Church should deal with articles of the Creed if on examination they should prove to have lost their usefulness as expressions of the Christian faith; whether this should be by deletion, by reformulation, or by re-interpretation of an unchanged letter—except to say that the third course is somewhat commended by the practice of secular law, where faults in statutes

which have lost their fitness to fact are amended by equity or legal fiction. Here we are content if we have made good the principle that the Church has a way and means of reconstructing her doctrines when the wording of them has become an instrument inapt to do the work of a creed, which is to keep alive the life unto Christ both in the Church and in its members severally. That way and means is, when the question rises with a real cogency, to make experiment, to put the disputed formula to the touchstone. Does it make for life in the Body of Christ and its Members that we should pronounce the ancient words, and pronounce them with the ancient meaning? When a man tries to understand what the fact is which a credal article asserts, and then tries to make his conduct such as a reasoning and self-controlled man would adopt if he were convinced of that fact and of its influence on his well-being, what is the result? Is he a better man for it, is he a larger, stronger, purer man, more trustworthy in business, more loving and helpful to his neighbour, more charitable and also sound in his judgment of others, more exacting in judgment of himself? To be these things is to be more alive in soul. This is the test of truth in a creed. It may be hard to apply the test, since we are not as God to look upon the heart of man, but there is no other test, nor ever was. Christians have never really believed an article of the Creed, however they confessed it with the mouth, except so far as they found it made them better men, or,

in our language, made their soul alive unto God.

And that which happens to a man, does it also happen to a church? There is a difference in the case. Creeds written and published are of the Church and for the Church; they are the instrument of the corporate, not the individual faith. If the individual's expression of his belief is obsolescent and serves him well no longer, he can restore its helpfulness by reformulating it to his own heart's desire. Not so a church, still less the Church. Her Creed is her watchword and must have definiteness: it has to maintain continuity of the Past and the Present, and must have permanence. Yet, being the voice of the Church's thought it must change with the thought that changes or be the voice of it no longer. What then? Surely this. We must keep the ancient symbol, and teach the people what the thought is which the words are to symbolise to-day, what the belief is and what the actions are which the words they recite prompt them to believe and to do.

This cannot be impracticable, for we are already practising it. We all of us deal so with one article, 'the Descent into hell,' and all of us, one would hope, deal so with the 'Ascent into heaven.' Similarly we could all allow the doubters of the virginity of Mary to recite the clause with the meaning that they are confessing by it the Incarnation. Over 'the Resurrection of the Body' there is no real trouble: it only needs that by 'the Body' we *mean* what we say, mean the thing

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which 'body' is. For the Body that can have a resurrection is not flesh but spirit. Body, as we have had to note, is but the organ of intercourse between spirit and spirit, is indeed the spirit of the man itself having intercourse with his likes in nature. When then we declare the rising of the body, what we are affirming is that our spirit after death will have intercourse with our human brothers—yea, and with Jesus Christ in his Manhood, the firstborn of many brethren.

It can then be done, this reconstructing of a Church's creed. But by what process? How is the experiment to be conducted?

## CHAPTER X

### THE RECONSTRUCTION OF A CHURCH

#### *II.—Amendment of Creed*

THIS question how, by what process, a Church can reconstruct a creed, shall be answered by a study of how she did it in that chapter of her earthly story which among catholic-minded Churchmen is regarded as most authoritative. How was the Nicene reconstruction effected?

Arius preaches that the Christ is but part-divine. Constantine summons the bishops to decide. Athanasius sways the Council; the Clerus promulgate the Homöousion, and after half a century of vicissitudes and violences in the war of Orthodox and Arian the Assensus Populi enables the Constantinople settlement. *Judicavit orbis terrarum*. The Church Universal 'made the Creed, the Son is of one substance with the Father, by an action of its whole being which was an act of living unto God.' <sup>1</sup>

One remarks that a half-century, from Nicaea to Constantinople, is a lengthy period for the reconstruction of an article of the Creed. A present-day decision should not take so long as this, nor

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<sup>1</sup> *Creed and the Creeds*, J. H. Skrine, p. 146.

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should it involve the miseries and shames which disfigure that story. Athanasius, if he comes forward with us, should not be expelled from a bishopric or lesser office by his opponents, nor yet should Arius be sent into exile. But we must be prepared, if not for the violences of the fourth century, yet for some delays. By our patience we must win our souls and the truths which keep them living souls. Patience. We have more of it now than then, but not enough. Patience there must be of scholars who explore, patience of Church authorities exploring the explorers' results, patience of lay zealots with the priests' slowness to pronounce, with the Scribes' reluctance to bring forth new things and old, patience of the pious who 'love but know not,' with the thinkers who better know than they, but not less than they may love; this endurance and long-suffering while the issue of the experiment pends is the condition of a right issue. But how hard it seems to be for Churchmen to have this patience one with another, though it verily is our souls we are to win!

But to inspect more closely this classical instance of creed-making, how was the Assensus Populi achieved? The doings of the Patres in Council are chronicled, not the doings of the multitude who tested and approved what the Bishops promulgated. That is a story which is not to be read on the written page as we can read how Athanasius hides for his life, how Arius expires on his way to a triumph; which Emperor succoured one

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champion, and which the other ; what votes were cast in council for this cause and for that: But sympathy can recover the complexion of the event, though not the detail. These men must have framed their creed, as each of us to-day frames his own personal creed, by *living* it and finding that it brought him life. So far as they took any share at all in the creed-making, they asked their own hearts the question, Is the Christ of Arius or the Christ of Athanasius the answer to my spirit's need ? Which of them is life-giver to me ? I am layman and not learned clerk, but I have some understanding of practical things, and I will know whether this belief in a God made flesh is a power upon things or a futility. I am trader and understand good business ; in the exchanges of the moral life are they ' wise money-changers,' as Jesus in an unwritten saying bade us be, who traffic in this belief ; do they reap their interest in it ? I am statesman : does it counsel me in statecraft ? Thinker : does it point me to the secret of the World's Order ? Poet : does it illumine the world's beauty ? Hand-worker : what dignity does it lend my coarse labour, what delivery from my coarse lusts ? I am a master's slave : could the lesser Christ of Arius make me free in soul ? I am sufferer, sighs one ; if this word makes all my bed in my sickness, it shall be my faith. I am child yet, whispers another, but it makes me ' full of growing ' to believe that Mary's son was Son of God. I am boy that shall be man and would be strong ; I will know if what



they say is true, and if a spirit of counsel and of strength is in me from this Jesus to make me fearless unto death.

We men of to-day are men of like passions with those creed-makers of the fourth century, and can frame or re-frame our creeds by the same method—the test of life. There will be the same two moments of the experiment—a *Promulgatio* and an *Assensus*—but they will be less visibly articulated. The two houses, as it were, of *Patres* and *Populus* will sit together as one, for in the modern Church it is not in practice, however it be in theory, the bishops *as bishops* who initiate movements in religion; that belongs rather to the prophetic order than the priestly. The debate will take place indeed in set councils of Church authorities, but much more in the reasonings of pulpit, press, platform, orator's chair in park or street corner, in study-circles, conferences of religious fellowships, with now and again a sermon or an article or an ecclesiastic incident at which smothered fires of controversy take flame. But most of all determinative will be the massive but impalpable movement of the corporate mind, blindly groping after the good of human existence, and discerning, it knows not how, that such a doctrine of a scribe leaves a man's spirit hungry and cold, but such a word of a prophet sets the heart a-beat. Then at the shock of some challenging question of an innovator, or only at 'the unimaginable touch of time,' the corporate soul delivers its experience of what truth makes life

in it ; and there comes into being, if not with changed words yet with changed understanding of them, a new creed by which the Church can grasp the truth and hold it fast for use.

This is the story of creed-making as it can be told without the help of our Gospel of the Manhood. But our subject is the help that gospel renders to a Church that would revise a creed. Of the Nicene formulation I have said that it was an action of the whole being of the Church which was an act of living unto God. We must deepen that language to match the depth of the present reasoning. The Church in her counsellings does indeed live unto God, but it is by a life which is, immediately, unto Christ and to Christ in His Manhood.

Christ in His Manhood. Let us ponder again what this means. When we speak as does the author of the Quicunque of 'the Manhood taken into God' we are using words which may have some logical value but no religious helpfulness. Manhood is not a thing in itself, it is not a substantive but an adjective, comes into being only as shadow comes when there is a substance to make it. There must be a Man there to make Manhood, as there could be no Godhead if there were not God. So we must be bold enough to say not that the Manhood of Christ was taken into God, for even if it be so the fact could have no bearing on our human fate ; but that the Man Christ Jesus, this Man whose nature and history among us men we know, that *He* was taken into God, He with that nature

of His and that history on earth with its consequences carried on in heaven. *How* this Humanity could be united with the Divine Being is unimaginable, because we can image only the human member in that union, not the divine ; but we must hold that all in Jesus which was man went with Him from the Cross and the Tomb into that unfeaturable mode of existence which we name Oneness with God.

Jesus of Nazareth was not brought to nothingness by the death. To suppose this is Docetism, which is heresy in which some of our present theologians are unaware entangled, when they denounce as heretical the counter supposition that the individual man survived the Cross. (What, one must ask, are the hopes of our own survival, if Jesus in whose likeness we are to 'rise' is not risen, not 'He Himself' as in the Upper Room He claimed to have done, not He, but an abstract or only ghostly thing, a 'Glorified Humanity'?) No, no ; the time has gone by in which we can content ourselves in religion with abstractions, if indeed there ever was the time when we could, however it might be with the theologians, who satisfied with them, even they, not their religion but their theology. It was to deliver us from the weakness of the former abstract faith that Christ came in the flesh ; Christ shall profit us nothing, and our faith is vain or no better than the faith of Abraham, if Jesus who became a man has not remained a man. And if He has not,

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where then is now Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Mary : where and what is He ? What became of that human person ? Was He, that living, breathing, thinking, working, loving One, taken back at death from 'the shores of light' into the blind deep of abysmal Night and Nothingness ; that a something that was *of* him but was not He, a quality which is nothing apart from that which it qualifies, the Manhood, that this Nothing might be taken on to inherit the eternity that Is ? Nay, we know that Jesus Christ is alive, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

What, then, is the value for the Church in council about the Creed, of this faith in the Abiding Manhood ? What advantage have we over the Hebrew prophet who could say, 'the word of the Lord came unto me,' and over the council at Jerusalem which could head a decree with, 'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us . . .' ?

We have the value which it was to Paul to know, when he halted unresolved at the Anatolian cross-ways, that 'the Spirit of *Jesus* suffered him not' to take the barren pathway, and turned him toward a great door and an effectual that opened on the western world and let pass the Gospel to the Gentile. It is the value for man of a counsellor who is human as himself.

That was a new thing in religion. Moses, Church leader of the past, spoke with his divine Director face to face ; but that is no more than metaphor for a close commune with the Unseen. The Churchman

of to-day speaks with his divine Adviser, not face to face indeed, yet mind to mind, and human to human mind, and that not in figure but in fact. This intercourse is more than colloquy: it is dialectic; it is the interpenetration of two intelligences unequal but intercommunicable, whose co-operaunce in thought is the mutual activity of mental life between the two by which truth comes to a surer birth. And how accessible is this Adviser! Where two or three are gathered in the name of His cause, there in the council-room at once is He. How open to our converse! Being human He finds no human thinkings of ours, however blind and stumbling, alien from His understanding; it is easy to express ourselves to Him, and His answers mould themselves to the unevennesses of our rough conceptions. And a Counsellor how trusted! For in earthly business we crave in an adviser not one who meets us with cold, aloof ideals, with abstract, impersonal principles, but one who is also interested, though not with self-interest, in our concerns, to whom it matters that we decide rightly. But how our concern does matter to this Friend in council! What concerns Him so much as this?

For our concern is nothing less to Him than the life He lives as Man. If our life as men consists, as it does, all save the low bodily needs and the highest spiritual, in the relations we bear to our fellows of co-operation of wills, intercourse of minds, and sympathy of hearts, of what else should consist the life of the Christ for that of Him which is Jesus

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the Son of Man ? The affairs in time of His mortal brethren are an employment of His activities. Shall we be afraid to entertain this vision of the Incarnate One, His manner of living since the expiry of His own mortal term ? No, let us have the courage of our belief. Christians of the past have been bold enough in their imaginings of the Christ who has entered into His glory ; have seen Him with the eyes as a flame of fire, feet like unto fine brass, countenance as the sun shineth in his strength. But what better warrant had the Apocalyptist for his portraiture of the slain Christ who is the Living One, than have (be it humbly said) we Christians of to-day who borrow our imagery not as the Hebrews did from the devout dreams of ancestors in prophecy, but from the veridical source of the record which tells what manner of man was Jesus when He was men's counsellor in the days of His flesh, and who trust the unchanging truth of that portraiture in the ever-changing days in which He still as at the first says to his disciples, ' Behold Me, that it is I Myself.'

Yes, let us have the courage of our belief. We may need it. For to some this Gospel of a living Jesus who is counsellor of the Church at each fresh cross-road in her journey may appear a hard saying. One has known when to advance it before a gathering of Church people met to consider their attitude toward a critical question of Church policy was to be received by an aghast silence, as of a grove of singing-birds under a hawk or a thunder-cloud. Or

perhaps to have it demanded by some headlong brother, zealot of the Primitive, 'Why the words of Christ Himself in the New Testament are not good enough authority for an occasion of the Church?' The answer, of course, is that they are indeed good enough, unless Christ has still better and fuller and apter words for us than those few which the New Testament has preserved. For a newer than the New Testament is here and a Christ greater than the Christ of Galilean days, even Jesus who is with us all the days. This Jesus Christ takes part in all experiences of men His brethren, making their questionings His counsellings, their decision a judgment of His and theirs together.

Yet those who are too wise to charge me with neglect of the New Testament may say that I am adding nothing to them in my reference of the judgment to the Living Christ; that they are doing it under the name of belief in the Holy Spirit, the representative of Christ as the guide of the Church in each successive age and its problems, 'showing us the coming things.' I would reply that the conception of Jesus in His Manhood adds very much indeed to that of the Spirit, which was a belief possessed already by the pre-Christian Church. But also that in effect they are invoking the Spirit rather to interpret a past revelation, that of Scripture, and a past judgment of the Church, that of the Four Centuries, than to interpret the situation of the faith at the actual moment of the Church's history. They are using a static theology, we a



dynamic. We refer ourselves to a Christ who is the co-eval of our world, whose Human Personality (be it reverently said but convincingly) is for ever growing age by age as the number grows of them that are being saved by their personal union with Him; whose judgments therefore arise from an experience of human fact deeper than that of earlier centuries, and, though exempt from defect through human error, are not exempt from change by progress and development. To the Manhood of Jesus, whose knowledge matches our circumstances and whose mind can make itself level to our understandings, we refer the cause.

But in what form can we make that reference? Can we do any otherwise than the Church has always done when she deliberates on a matter of faith, and, applying her best wisdom to the problem, prays for the guidance of the Spirit? Yes, in our consultation of the Christ we attempt something other than this. We ask, What belief concerning the matter questioned makes life in the believers, Church and her members severally—life unto this Jesus Christ Himself? The answer of Christ comes to us in the life given to us or the life withheld from us when we essay the vital touch of our personalities upon His. This is the experiment by which we verify a belief. Thus, for example, if in the present dispute concerning the clause which affirms a virgin birth we find that to credit that event brings illumination of our thoughts about the Incarnation and inspiration of our will to serve



its purpose by our own action, we judge that the birth of Jesus was on that wise. If, however, we find that the acceptance of the physical fact does not satisfy our intelligence nor prompt our activities, but that on the other hand a belief that in Jesus there was created a new thing, a human being having perfect vital union with God, is light for the mind and strength for the will, then we conclude that while the physical mode of Christ's birth remains uncertain, the Incarnation is a certainty of our faith.

So then when our brothers of the 'catholic' mind would call us to the definitions of the New Testament and Nicaea as the final standards of belief, our reply is, 'We stand at the judgment-seat of Christ Himself, where the sentence should be sought. We submit the case to Jesus, who is here to receive the plea, who knows what manner of men are His disciples of this generation, what truth they need for their soul's health, and in what words of the living speech of to-day they should utter their belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, that believing they may have life through His name.'

*Appello Jesum Christum heri, et hodie, ipsum et in secula.*

## CHAPTER XI

### THE REUNION OF THE CHURCHES: EPISCOPACY AND THE EUCHARIST

THE Reunion of Christendom—can the Gospel of the Abiding Manhood bring to pass this?

Those Christians in the divided communions who desire this return to Oneness have had for a watchword, 'Back to Christ.' Could we but all get back behind our credal and sacramental systems which differ to a common knowledge of Christ, we should find ourselves, they think, again at one. Should we? To what Christ would the Roman return, to what the Orthodox in the East, to what the Anglican, to what the Presbyterian and the Free Churchman and the Christians who own no church? Not to the same; but one to the Divine Lawgiver of the Church, one to the impersonal world-ruler who figures vast on Byzantine domes, one to the Revealer of the Trinity, the sacramental system, and ecclesiastic order, others to the Teacher of a way of salvation for the soul of the individual man, and yet others to a personifying name of a philosophic ideal. This Christ is not one but many; to return to Him is not to return to one same point of rally. Christ indeed is not divided,

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but Christ of our Christologies is. 'Back to Christ' then is not the word which can charm back to union and concord.

'Back to Jesus' is that word. For Jesus in His Abiding Manhood is not many, but one. Jesus of Nazareth, Son of Mary, is a single person whose identity remains though it has expanded by the event of death from the mortal and finite phase into the eternal and infinite existence. He is a person whose mind and character are known or are knowable to all Christians everywhere. To none of us is he known completely, and our visions of the personality differ according as we realise with more distinctness these or those features of it. But this is so with our realisation even of any mortal friend, whom yet we know to be the same person for all the eyes that recognise him.

Somewhat then as in the mundane concern men who can be rallied to the support of an intellectual principle tend to separate again when their differing interpretations of it define and declare themselves, but are more solidly and durably united if the principle is embodied in the person of an individual leader, so is it in the high spiritual concern. The scattered detachments of the Christian army would be in vain recalled to the name of the Christ as a base for their reconcentration, because that is no definite point of repair. But the name of Jesus of Nazareth, author of life to mankind, sets up a mark which all who see it at all see as the same. Not only so. To press further the mundane analogy,

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as political sections can best maintain solidarity if their allegiance to a common policy is reinforced by loyalty to the inspiring and energising character of a chief, so in religion the separatists regathered to the person of Jesus who is called Christ are brought to a station which is not only a point of concentration but is a power-station, the generative source of spiritual existence. It was Jesus of Nazareth, Master of Peter and the brethren, not yet the Exalted Christ, whom John records to have said, 'I am the Life,' 'I can give the water which who drinks has eternal life,' 'I am the Bread from heaven which who eats lives for ever.' To come back to the Person of the living Jesus is to come into the vital contact with the Life-giver, it is to be Christian not in word but in power. There is no other Christianity, but only this, a life lived unto Jesus in His Manhood which is one and continuous with His Godhead, but is that part of His whole personality with which we men can have relations. The Church exists that it may realise this life in itself and impart it to those without. The many churches, therefore, can become one in the degree in which they severally attain this life. This, then, is the way of reunion—that each church should have and communicate the life unto Jesus Christ.

But a church—can a *church* have this life unto Jesus? We all understand how the single Christian can have this life, and some of us say that this is enough for them and they find no need for a

church. These might as reasonably say that for their natural life they see no need of the family ; how came they into the world without it and how long without it could they have remained in the land of the living ? But the Church is the family of man not as natural but as spiritual. It is the cause of his entry into the life unto Christ, for how else could he know of Christ : and the preserver of him in that life, for how many in solitude could sustain a faith which was no longer what Paul named ' the mutual faith both of them and their fellows ' ?

The question, ' Can a church have life unto Jesus in His Manhood ? ' is answered by saying that life unto Jesus is the fact to which we give the name of ' church.' As the family of natural man is the fact of a vital union of the family group with each member, and of both with their envioning world, so the Church is the vital union of a group of Christians with each soul of those composing it and of both Church and soul with Christ, who is the life of all.

But it is with Christ as Jesus, as the Abiding Manhood living and working at once in heaven and earth, that the union is. We have to image the Christian society as an immeasurable web of individual souls strung together by living threads which, like the tissue of nerves which organise a physical body, run from and return to one centre, the Person of Jesus, carrying to and fro the vibrations in which each soul has intercourse with all

others through that centre and through them with it. This is the Church—this threefold interchange, triune communion, of Jesus Christ, the Church and the Member.

It follows that two separated communities of Christians will become again united in the degree in which they reknit this threefold communion so that the current of life again passes unimpeded between the members of the one group and the other and between all and Jesus Christ.

What hinders this?

In the case of the Churches between which a reconciliation is at this time most practicable, the Anglican and the other Reformed communions, the hindrance is a difference in the theory and practice of the Sacraments, especially the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Anglican holds that the rite is not duly celebrated unless the celebrant has been ordained by a bishop. These other churches reject the institution of episcopacy. In consequence Anglicans believe themselves debarred from communion in a non-episcopal rite, and think, some of them, that non-episcopalians should not be admitted to our communions. But without inter-communion in the Sacrament which most unites souls to Christ there will be no true oneness of the flocks under the one shepherd.

Is then Episcopacy a bar to reunion?

The Anglican of the 'catholic' school maintains that episcopal ordination is necessary for the minister of the Sacrament because Jesus in the

days of His flesh, or His first disciples acting under His inspiration, so laid down the law of the Ministry. The historic proof of this is so wanting in definiteness as to make a precarious bridge for the passage of the argument from the charge to the Apostles to the rule of the Eucharist. It will be a sounder reasoning, therefore, to proceed from the other end ; to begin with a study of the Sacrament itself, and from the nature of the Eucharistic action infer the nature of the instrumentality, especially of that chief instrument, the minister, which is required to make it effective or ' valid.' We shall then be basing the institution of the ministry not on the uncertain ground of a doubtfully interpreted history, but, as will appear, on the bed-rock of divine-human reality. And we shall still be resting it on the authority of Christ Himself, and that with a confidence incalculably greater : for we shall be referring the judgment not to the Jesus of history only, but to the living and indwelling Jesus into whose being the historic Jesus is taken up as the past of every man is taken up into his present.

This Jesus Christ, of yesterday and of to-day, is, in every act of human communion, but most and surest in the eucharistic act, and therefore in our study of how that act must be performed, ' a very present help ' to His disciples in their counsellings concerning the faith. It is to Him that the decision will be referred by us when according to our method we search out this

institution of the Supper to learn how it is a ministry of that life spiritual of which the Abiding Christ is the author, what the manner is of that ministration, and what the conditions of its efficacy. It is to Him we bring the case for judgment. So to make enquiry is to do the act of vital intercourse between the Church and her Master's living Self.

What, then, is the thing which we name the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, when we seek to learn this in counsel with the Lord Himself?

It is, we say, the partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ. That is a figure: what is the fact it figures to us?

It is, say some, the Sacrifice of the Mass. That too is a figure; for what is it to make a sacrifice, and how is it made in this Sacrament?

It is, say others, the memorial of Christ's death and passion. But why do we commemorate this, and what good is it to remember the death and passion?

And we: what do we say? If we follow still the lead of that conception of human and divine reality which has led us hitherto, we will say that to eat the Lord's Supper is to do the highest act of human life, the act by which man lives unto the Reality through living unto Jesus Christ.

For what is the action that passes under a church roof when a priest hallows the Bread and Wine and the people eat and drink with him?

What passes is not the movement of the celebrant's voice and gesture, and the action of the



communicant. There passes an act of the three-fold fellowship, the Triune Communion. The man up-renders himself to the Church, the Church makes offer of herself to the man, and each renders self to the other as a surrender of the self to Christ. That is what happens, if there happens anything at all except purposeless bodily gestures and meaningless vibrations of air. But this happening is life in the highest. For life along all the scale is, as we have noted, a triune communion. The herb lives by an intercourse with soil and air, its nearest environment; the man lives by intercourse with his family; and each by that intercourse lives to the whole environing reality. But here in the eucharistic meal 'we offer and present unto the Lord and heavenly Father ourselves, our souls and bodies,' the very self and the whole self of us; all that is within us makes endeavour to live unto the All that is without, God who encompasses us. And the communion is triune: it is the feast of the love of Christ and of charity with the neighbour; we become very members incorporate in the mystical body of the divine Son by realising our membership in the blessed company of all faithful people; our desire to serve the Christ utters itself in love for the brother, and through fellowship with the brotherhood our heart discovers its fellowship with the Lord of both.

If the Eucharist is this act of human life in the highest, a threefold Self-Interchange of Christ, the Church, and the Soul, there is required that the

Church should be present and take part in the action. That she can do only through an agent, whom she charges with her will to take part in a communion. The minister of the rite is this agent ; what he does in the ritual is the Church's doing. How does the Church charge this agent with her will ? What kind of action is the ordination of a celebrant ?

Let us go back beyond the Ordinals of the later Church and study ordination in its elemental form where its significance will be least perplexed by elaboration. We must reconstruct the fact by imagination, for there is no distinct history to help us.

‘It is the evening of a Love-Feast in the new Christian settlement at Cæsarea, and the brethren meet in the house of one Stephanas. Who shall take the head of the table ? It must be he who will, when the meal has ended, rise to break the bread and bless the cup which show forth the Death. Then it may be that Stephanas, who is host, shall do it. But Stephanas will not have it so this time. He whispers to Fortunatus at his side and they both look across the room to a new resident in Philippi, but “an old disciple,” one who in Jerusalem had the friendship of the very chiefest apostles. “Brother Mnason, the Church in this house would have you preside to-night.” The brethren murmur assent ; and the Church has ordained a celebrant.

‘What is this action ? There has taken place

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the mutual self-giving of Church and Member and Christ. The little group of the Church in the house of Stephanas have rendered their good-will to Mnason, laid in his hands the fortune of the Holy Feast : he has given his will to them, offered to the service of their souls in this conduct of the sacred mystery his own grace of devoutness ; and both have done it, not to the other, but to the Christ in that other. The current of the triune intercourse has run the circuit ; the Church in this house has in ordaining Mnason lived a moment of the life unto God, has held *a* communion in order that *the* Communion may be holden." <sup>1</sup>

This is but a guess at an irrecoverable chapter of religious history ; yet can we make a likelier ? Will anyone, for instance, tell us that there must have been an Apostle present or an Apostle's delegate, for that otherwise the rite would not be holden ? That would be a *petitio principii*.

But if our guess at the original Ordinal of the Church is a true or even a near guess, then it is pregnant with issues for the student of Church order. It holds in embryo the organic law of the creation of a minister of the Sacrament. For what is the type of action disclosed in this elemental outline ? *It is a corporate life-function of the Church towards Christ effected by means of a life-function between Church and member.* ' The Church in the house of Stephanas offers and Mnason accepts the

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<sup>1</sup> *Eucharist and Bishop.* J: H. Skrine, p. 12.

ministry of a Eucharist: that offer and that acceptance united are an offering of self by the whole fellowship to Christ. 'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us,' is the language of the first recorded Church Council announcing a momentous decision; and it is language in which we may without real incongruity describe the action of the handful of worshippers who motion Mnason to the presidency of the holy meal. Even the detail of the domestic scene follows the procedure of a Church Council. If at Nicaea the Fathers decreed and Christendom confirmed, so Stephanas and Fortunatus promulge the appointment of Mnason, and an *assensus populi* is accorded by the gathered brethren.'

What is here brought out is the fact that the minister of the Sacrament is ordained *by the community*. How is episcopal ordination related to this fact? What difference in the ordaining act is imported when the authority to celebrate the Eucharist is conferred by a Bishop?

There is no difference in the essentials of the act. It is still a communion between the Church and the priest to be ordained. The ordaining bishop is as Stephanas at Cæsarea, the presbyters whom he summons to lay their hands with his upon the ordinand personate the assembled communicants in that house: this group of the bishop and the presbyters are in this action the Church. Between this Church and the ordinand takes place the Self-Interchange, which is for both a

Self-Interchange with Christ. The kneeling priest becomes identified, incorporated, with the Church which commissions him, so that when he celebrates it is the Church which is celebrant, and therefore the Sacrament is valid and grace passes to the participants.

What distinguishes the choice of a president at Cæsarea from the ordination of a priest is the perpetuity of the authority conferred on the latter. Yet the perpetuity is *during the will of the Church*. She can withdraw the power to minister from an unworthy priest. The permanence of his office was a necessity in the enlarged church; *it does not result from a power indefectibly inherent in the man through his ordination and therefore independent of the Church*: only while She abides in him and he in her are the acts of his person the acts of hers. This truth, *which cannot be reconciled with the theory of transmission through a line of episcopal personalities* must be jealously maintained.

Finally the consecration of the Bishop to ordain the priest is the same fact in essence as the ordination of a priest. The making of a bishop is a triune communion in which the Church, personated by the three bishops, makes with the Bishop-elect the Interchange of Self as an Interchange of Self with Christ.

And like the priest, the bishop is consecrated in perpetuity, but a perpetuity *during the will of the Church*. The power of the bishop, that is, inheres not in himself but in the society.

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This is a truth pregnant of conclusions as to the matter before us, the validity of the Sacraments in non-episcopal churches.

For plainly the question to be asked is not whether in the community with which we desire intercommunion the celebrant is ordained by a bishop, but whether he is ordained by the community of which he is a member, becomes, that is, their agent carrying their will to celebrate a Sacrament. Behind that question is the other: whether that community is a church in the sense in which our own is a Church, that is, is joined to Christ by the life-bond of the threefold fellowship?

These are the elements of a decision as to the rightness of intercommunion between an episcopal and a non-episcopal church. How then does the Gospel of the Manhood help us to reach a decision?

He who accepts that gospel must hold that the problem will be resolved not either solely or even mainly by the appeal to ecclesiastic history and the slender and dubious indications in the New Testament, but first and last by direct consultation of the living Jesus in His human personality. The appeal to scripture and tradition has not won any clear award. Nor can it in the nature of the case win an award which would be final. For were it ever so certain that Jesus in His earthly lifetime distinctly commanded an episcopal order of ministry, we should still have to ask whether He commands it *now* in the greatly altered conditions of our social and intellectual life. For an answer we should

have to refer ourselves to Jesus as He is to-day.

‘Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come,’ said Paul in regard of questions of ministerial order. To judgment on this present question of order the Lord will come, if the Church will await His coming into council. If our belief is sincere in the Abiding Manhood of Him who is Maker of the Church, we shall change our posture of mind towards the whole study of reunion and this central problem of sacramental order. We shall lift our eyes from the pages of New Testament writers, who have no answer to our difficulties because they had not experienced them, and from those of later Christians whose record of the episcopal fact of their time is so uncertainly decipherable, and we shall instead ‘look unto Jesus, the author and finisher’ of the Church and her faith. That means that with our best human wit and pureness of intention we shall try to discern what exactly was the mind of Jesus when He instituted the rite; what it was that He meant it to do for man, what instrumentality was plainly necessary that the rite might serve that purpose, and whether the agency which was aptest at the first is the only medium available for all subsequent times. But it means also that we shall judge nothing till the Lord come to our counsellings, and we meet Him there in the belief that thither He does come and our conference is a communion in which we live unto Him who is the Life—the Life which is the *Light* of men.



Am I controverting the doctrine of those of our Church who walking about Zion to tell the towers thereof have marked her bulwarks of the Quadrilateral, and set up among her houses the Historic Episcopate? I think not at all, if they rest their doctrine on the authority not of the Church, but of the Christ Himself, the Church's founder: for I claim that we are appealing to the judgment and will of the Lord Christ, the Maker and Maintainer of the Church, with a more unreserved loyalty than those who appeal to the Christ only of the New Testament. Their claim is that the fabric of ministerial order is built on the foundation which is the mind and will of the Christ of history. We are basing deeper than they and building higher. For we too base on the same historic Christ, but the Christ of *all* history, the same to-day as yesterday, the pledged Ruler of the Church in all the days even to the end of the world.

And yet, when all is said, is it in truth the rule of the Eucharist prescribing that none may minister 'the sacring of the mass' except the bishop or his delegate—is it this that hinders reunion? Or has this argument been spent in vain on a question which is not the real issue? It is easier to believe that our dissidence over the rights of the sacrament is a dispute over the rights of the minister, is in fact that contention concerning the place of priesthood in the Kingdom of Christ which is a mode of an 'ancient difference,' the contrarience of Authority and Freedom, Autocracy and Popular



Government, Tradition and Modernism, Society and the Individual, and, at this point of impact, the Rule of the Priest and the Priesthood of the People.

There are blessed signs that this contention is among us relaxing. The principle of Authority which for its first thought in Churchmanship had the meek presbyter-bishop, but for its second the 'proud prelate,' has filled a circle and has for its third thought, which is 'a riper first,' the Bishop of the Lambeth Conference, who has felt 'the great wind blow across earth' and has drawn in and breathed again the spirit of repentance and lowly fellowship and the mind of *servus servorum*. What need we now but that from the other side the spirit of a 'mutual faith,' the self-interchange which makes life, may lead the asserters of freedom past their second thought of barren dissidence to the riper first, the brotherhood in service which is perfect freedom.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN

THE law of the Sacraments and their ministry which we have been studying in relation to the problem of Reunion calls up for Anglicans a question of Order less immediately connected with the differences which divide churches, but of only less practical and present interest : that of the Ministry of Woman. A consideration of it will not be out of place at this point.

The seriousness of this question lies mainly in a claim whispered in some quarters for the admission of women to the priesthood. There is no doubt outcry at the proposal to let a woman preach, but it is the 'Seek ye the priesthood also?' which most rallies the defenders of things as they have hitherto been to resist innovation. They plead St. Paul's judgments on woman's rights and duties and the Church's unvaried exclusion of the sex from the higher sacred offices. The innovators urge that we have outgrown the Jewish prejudice of woman's essential inferiority and have acknowledged her equality of opportunity with man in most branches of public service in the secular sphere. How then does the believer in the Manhood of Jesus as the giver of life and of light through

life approach a judgment? From whichever side of the controversy he starts he must tell himself that it is right or is wrong that a woman should be priested according as her priesthood will bring more energy into the Christian society as a whole and quicken the religious activities of individuals; or on the contrary lower the efficiency of the whole order of ministers, cause the grace of Sacraments to fail, corrupt the soundness of the Word, and breed confusion in the moral relations of male and female.

How is this to be determined? As all questions, by the Church in council, but with a counselling which is the triune communion of the Church, the member, and the Christ; the spiritual dialectic of the three, in which the debate is a mental and moral act-of-life between the brotherhood and the individual brother and between each of these and Another who sits in the midst. Whatever of self the one reasoner yields up to his fellow it is to this Other that he yields it; and what he welcomes to his own mind from his fellows he entertains as coming through them from the Lord. This is the holy dialectic by which truth comes to the birth.

Stated in this abstract way it sounds a bare and unhelpful truism. Translated into the concrete it means that the disputants in council are called on to make a sacrifice which is very real, the surrender of pre-concept, predilection, prejudice, the acceptance in return of a brother's contrasting vision of the right. That sacrifice of self is costly,

the refusal of it is often the really 'last infirmity of noble mind.' How hardly shall he that has been staunch in stemming the feminist movement in the realm of politics give entertainment to woman's promotion in the ecclesiastic kingdom; how hardly the innovator do justice to the sincere and devout loyalty of his sacerdotal brother to the sanctities of the shrine.

'How,' it will be asked, 'is this method a new one? Where does it differ from that of the earliest Church Council which published a decree as that which "seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us"?' I think it differs not at all, if only that Council meant, as later did the greatest of its members, that the Holy Ghost was one with the *Spirit of Jesus*. But while a school of Churchmen among us would restrict the explicit directions of the Spirit of Counsel to the few and fragmentary deliverances of the New Testament which have relevance to modern problems, and will acknowledge catholic authority only in the edicts of the undivided Church, we for our part must discern a real newness in our contrasted way of consulting the divine oracles. For our way is subversive of that theory of catholicity. We say that the conditions of a judgment on this as other problems of to-day were not before the mind of fourth-century bishops or of New Testament writers, nay, or even of Jesus the human teacher of Galilean peasants; but they *are* before the mind of Jesus in His Manhood Glorified, when He sits in our midst unseen and unheard, but hearing and

seeing all, and knowing the things that are and also the things that shall be hereafter, and raying forth upon our hearts and minds from His own the light of His knowledge and the warmth of His love of God. From an apostle writing to a flock that he suffers not a woman to talk in the meetings of the Church in a Christian house we turn with a reverent dissent to the same apostle writing that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female ; and then from him again to that mind of Jesus which is, we judge, reflected in our own present-day experience of our Christian womanhood and the power they have shown of action on the higher levels of mankind's business to-day. If woman can be teacher, healer, administrator, justicer, handling these the dearest interests of man's social and moral existence, is it likely, where those interests overpass the margin of the natural life and become affairs of man in the region of spirit, that this bourne cannot be overstepped, and she who has been found competent to teach her kind in the child's classroom or even in the lecture-hall, as Paul in the school of one Tyrannus, cannot possess the competence to do the same when the audience is gathered under a consecrated roof ?

' Ah, but our new women are like those sons of Levi ; they seek the priesthood also. That cannot be.' Do we certainly know whether it can be or cannot ? I am sure of one Churchman who must confess that he does not know yet. But to him it seems that we ought to seek to know, and that

the way is to ask the Living Christ. And this we can do. Not, however, by only going, as to a jurisconsult, to a New Testament writer or an early Doctor or a primitive Council. We will go to these, but also there must be a devout and open-minded study of the facts of woman's nature as they are at this day, of the essential facts of womanhood which concern the ministry of the Word, Sacraments, Discipline, and a study of the relation of the one set of facts to the other. What, we must enquire, is there in the interpreting of scripture which is beyond the compass of the feminine intelligence? What is there of a Churchman's practice and behaviour under authority which a Churchwoman is unable to exemplify? Why must we expect that we communicants would fail to receive the grace of the altar mystery if the hand and voice which consecrated the elements that convey the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ the Human were hand and voice not of a brother in the faith, but a sister?

This last is a shrewd question. It requires a deep answer demanding of us wisdom and courage. These must be found, both of them. For if ever problem was worthy of a Divine Interpreter to loose the knot, this question of a woman priest is such.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE RE-EVANGELISING OF ENGLAND

BUT what of them that are without? What shall be done for the ninety-nine sheep that are not in the fold but in the wild, the multitude who are Christian only in the sense that they are members of a nation that is so termed? Our Gospel of the Manhood, will it evangelise these; will it prove itself a Gospel of Christ by proving to be a Gospel to the Poor?

If I have persuaded anyone that here is a gospel which can reconstruct the Church of England and re-unite the Church of Christ, the persuasion will yet leave him heart-cold, unless this gospel can promise to re-evangelise the industrial many who are as sheep that have no shepherd. If this *is* the Gospel of Christ, these also it will bring and make one flock of the one shepherd.

What Church to-day finds in the resources of its own characteristic theory and system an instrument which can evangelise the masses? Is it the Roman with its appeal to the poor in knowledge, but a yoke which the educated throw off; the Eastern with its exclusion of progressive thought; the Free Churches with their attraction for adherents of middle social station but detachment

from the highest and the lowest strata? Is it lastly the Church of England with its temperate theology, cultured worships, and still surviving tone of feudalism? None of them would confess disablement, but which of them professes ability? None has among its distinctive gifts a capacity to reclaim society as a whole, nor perhaps have all of them together if they should concentrate the store of each, unless—unless indeed they should reconcentrate, as we have pleaded reunion requires, upon the person of Jesus, Son of Man.

And that reunion is still too distant to yield to any of the divided Churches a practical direction for immediate endeavour. It cannot be waited for. We must ask, What can the Church of England do out of her own resources to deserve her title of 'the Church of the English people'?

What, indeed, out of the resources which she counts as distinctively her own? We look out from the door of our Anglican house of prayer upon the swarming street, measure the industrial multitude without against the little company within, and—what can we do but 'lift up our prayer for a remnant that is left,' this little company of the Church's practising members? Be they ever so faithful souls, what are they among so many?

Besides, these few within the household of Christ, how ill-equipped they are for the task of the evangel to those without, if that evangel is to be the strict Anglican system, a Word conveyed in the sentences of the Nicene formula, a Sacrament



compassed about with a doctrine lofty and alarming, and fenced among a powerful section of Churchmen with austere preliminaries of fast and confession to a priest, and a Discipline, mild indeed and unexacting, of the 'Christian Year,' but archaic and unsympathetic with the actual circumstances and habits of our industrials to-day. One has somewhere heard the boast that 'the masses will be converted by the Mass': have we the heart to echo it, when we look out on the street?

What, then, shall the Church of England do? The answer we will attempt shall be introduced by an apologue.

When Balak, King of Moab, had sent for Balaam the son of Beor to bind a spell upon the aggressive tribe of Israel, he led the prophet to a spot whence 'thou shalt see,' he said, 'but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all; curse me them from thence.' Here he built altars and offered sacrifices. But later, when this spell-binding failed of the purpose, 'Balaam went not as at other times to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.' That is, for his spiritual dealings with the alien tribe he relied no longer on the rites of his native religion, the sacrificing of bullocks and rams upon the seven altars, but turned his eyes upon the host of Israel encamped at the wilderness edge on the borders of Moab, and drew from that spectacle the inspiration of his prophecy. In the language of our day, he

faced the facts of the religious situation and sought the solution of his problem there.

Our Churchmen's attitude towards the host of strangers is not that of Balaam to his. He was employed to ban them away from the commonwealth; our task is to draw them into it. But our trouble, like that of Moab, is that 'the people are many,' and our resources are unable to cope with them. Then we must do as Balaam did, must for the while turn away from our 'enchantments,' our traditional system of observances, even from those much-cherished 'last enchantments of the Middle Ages' breathed from Oxford towers; must turn away from these and set our face toward the wilderness. We must face the facts, our facts, the facts of the modern industrial multitude, the alien host camped on the border of the spiritual commonwealth, and consider by what attitude or effort of ours they can be gathered into our fellowship.

What are the facts of this industrial multitude, not as they are industrials of a particular national type, but as they are men and women? What are the facts of man, the denizen of earth; what his situation and destiny in the universe?

For what end is man in the world at all? He is there that he may live a life. To live a life is to make and maintain the interchange of the single organism with the world in which it finds itself. In this destiny man does not differ from other creatures that live. His difference from them is

in this, that whereas these lesser breeds develop to a certain type of form and power, and having reached that stature undergo arrest of growth, man's being suffers no such arrest but is capable of continuous expansion, to which our experience cannot assign any limit. This expansion is not within the material sphere only. Man's spiritual being, his consciousness in its twofold function of thinking and doing, can overpass the bounds of the sensible world and extend his being by intercourse with the supersensible existence. The human organism is in idea and potentiality, however insignificant is the actuality of its extension, capable of assimilating all created being, things visible and invisible, of becoming one with the whole Reality, of attaining a life infinite in duration and scope. Yes, this is the destiny of man, this is the due fulfilment of human kind; nothing less than to become one with God.

To conceive of man's situation thus is to remodel the image of the universe as Christians have hitherto envisaged it. They have thought of men as creatures moving on a floor of the earthly existence with the future either of an uplift to a heaven above or a fall as over a precipice into an abyss beneath. We view the universe no longer in this vertical perspective. If we may figure the landscape of the world visible and invisible by the geometry of space, the movement of man's being is not vertical but horizontal. His future is neither abrupt ascent nor descent from the level of

mortality, but either to extend continuously, like the ripple circle in a pool, the range of his conscious being toward the endless bounds of the All, or else to suffer contraction from his circumference inward toward the centre and then undergo a self-extinction. In this picturing of human destiny, there is not Dante's height of heaven or pit of hell, nor are the spiritual truths and values which underlie those now abandoned imaginings represented by any direct equivalent in this scheme. But we may here leave over the questions of the final heaven and hell, which under any scheme are problems unsolved, and may reason to practical conclusions from this datum of experience, that the affair of man has *continuity*: there is either a progressive widening of the consciousness towards the infinite or a narrowing towards annihilation.

A practical conclusion of the utmost significance at once emerges. It is this. *Salvation can be in all degrees.* Souls are not either simply 'saved' or simply 'lost,' as in the theologies of the past. That language must be changed. We must say that one soul has more of life unto God and one soul has less, and another may come to have no life at all. Under this conception of the realities of humanity, the Church's outlook upon the problem of preaching the gospel to the poor is radically changed, and the benumbing despair with which the national Church faces the demand to evangelise this so great people can be exchanged for the energy of hope. We may be assured that not only we

can by all means save some, but can by some means and *in some measure* save all.

'Each man makes God a little by his life,' says a French poet. That perhaps does not greatly move us : the atom is so very little of the All. But say that each life of a Christian makes more life in the Christ unto whom he lives, and the saying moves and warms. For as the spiritual self of every man is built up of those relations which unite him to his fellows, and each such new union can be an interest or a joy, an increment of his life, so must it be with the Manhood which is Jesus Christ. He who said, *Quia vivo et vos vivetis*, may we not dare to hear Him say, *Quia vos vivitis et Ego vivo?* Each least significant soul of man that is drawn into least response to the beatings of the heart of Christ is in its degree an increment of His Manhood's being, a something saved alive unto the Saviour, a thing that can be known, felt, loved, rejoiced in as by the Saviour so by Him that saves. Will the Christ not value this 'little' that becomes something of Himself? Shall we not count it worth our pains to draw it near to Him because it makes of the Christ only this little?

But the half is not told yet of the situation. Of our Gospel of the Manhood we have brought to bear on the problem of the Church's task but one factor, the abstract principle of Life as the base-law of creation, and therefore of the creature, Mankind. We have answered the questions, What is Salvation? and, Are they few that are saved? by

saying that Salvation is a life unto God and that those who are saved can in some degree or measure be not few but very many and even all.

But who is the Saviour who works this manner of salvation? Who or what is the power that makes men live unto God?

Our answer is that this Saviour is Jesus Christ, and the power by which He makes men live unto God is a power that is in His person. So far all Christians go with us; they all say our faith is faith in the person of Christ. We are inviting them to go further; to go as it will seem to them very much further, and agree with us that it is by the power of the Manhood, by the exercise of human faculties seated in His Person, that the Christ is the Maker of life. We believe that the Man, Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee, did not cease to be a man when he had undergone the passage from mortal existence to immortal and had become wholly one with the Father in heaven. We believe there was no annihilation of that Being with a human consciousness who walked in Galilee and died in Jewry. We who are in the flesh cannot indeed figure to our intelligence the present estate in the real world of the glorified Christ, cannot picture to ourselves the character of His relations to God the Final Reality, the forms in which intelligence and affection are embodied. We frame words for our ignorance, call Him 'Only-begotten Son,' the 'Incarnate Word,' the 'Second Person in the Trinity'; but the words do not name the

ineffable eternal fact, they only voice our longing to know that fact and the wistful guesses with which we peer into the dark. But this gospel, that the human personality of the Man Jesus was not extinguished by the Cross and sepulchre, but instead became infinite, or (not to go beyond our actual knowledge by the experience of the Christian centuries) *attained a potential and progressive infinitude* whereby he holds the relations of human intercourse with all men everywhere and in all times yet—this Gospel of the Manhood we hold fast and will not let it go. The Christ works His work of communicating life by an action of His human personality upon the personalities of men. We venture the confidence that in this truth we hold not only the way of salvation for common men, but the strength by which they can walk in the way, and the wayfaring men, though fools, not err therein.

Those whom we may have carried with us so far as to agree that the *human* powers of Christ, now possessing infinite opportunity, are sufficient for the salvation of His brethren in the flesh, are now asked to go further. We invite them to recognise a new light which psychological research is throwing on the redemptive process. We are coming to know not only that the power by which Christ works on men is human, but also what is the nature of that power.

There is, we have seen, a known function of human personality by which motions of the



intelligence and will which arise in one consciousness are conveyable to another at a distance without any signalling through eye or ear or other organ of sense, so that the mind of this other echoes the transmitted idea. or the will co-operates in the purpose. Grant only that there can be telepathy between a spirit still in the body and a spirit disembodied, that the thoughts and activities which are the stuff of religious faith can be transferred from one conscious being to another across the distance, whatever that interval be, which separates the fleshly from the spiritual: grant this, and we have found an inspiring interpretation of the redemptive agency by which Christ is Saviour of the world. As star vibrates light to star, as soul to soul 'strikes through a finer element of its own,' so the human spirit of Christ in the eternal Manhood can send from the distance of all the worlds the stroke of life and light upon all men in all times and in all places.

Once seen that this *can* be, it is almost seen that it *must* be. For by this conception divine faith and human science are combined in a unity of knowledge. If we trust our analysis of the telepathic fact—that it is a specific function of life in conscious beings—the process by which Jesus makes men to live is identified with that by which the herb springs and the tree flourishes and man's body grows and thrives by breath and food. It is the interchange of that in the mortal which is most himself—his thought and his will—with



thought and will of the divine Reality which he touches in the person of Christ. It is the 'commercing with the skies' in which the man uprenders self to God, who renders of Himself to man. A philosophy which makes a self-consistent whole of our knowledge of things heavenly and things of the earth has the highest warranty that reason demands.

That is why the Gospel of the Manhood will persuade our working-men and women to be Christians. Where the Church's teaching fails with them is in our failure to make our doctrine harmonise with their experience of human fact. They are philosophers enough to require that their knowledge of things should be a whole of knowledge, not divided between two mutually exclusive departments scrutinised by two kinds of understanding, the science of the wise, and the faith of the religious. In this gospel, religion and knowledge are but the two fields of one human experience, both to be investigated by the same human reason. So we commend it to their mind.

But if there is a philosophy of every man, so is there a religion. Of our manual workers the religion is, by the testimony of those who know them best, the instinct of Comradeship, the ideal of Fellowship in work. This ideal is the power not themselves which makes for a righteousness, that of fidelity to the common cause of men that labour. To it they offer the sacrifice of the strike, risking and enduring hunger for their fellows' good. This

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blind, narrow religion of class-fellowship is a faith, though a little one ; it is a first stone upon which the Christ can begin to build a Church of His, if we work under the Master-Builder's direction. What then they ignorantly worship, that declare we unto them. We call them to faith in Jesus the Good Comrade, the Galilean craftsman who went about doing good and gave His life for other men. Already that faith has touched them to a response when they have heard of Christ at all. Jesus was, they admit, the kind of man a craftsman should try to be. They think of Him, indeed, only as one who long ago set an example of the right way to live. We come to tell them that Jesus is not of long ago but of now, not an inspiring memory of the past but an energising force in things actual and present. Our Christian philosophy of the Trinity may be idle sound in their ears, even our religion of the Word made Flesh may find no way into their heart, but faith in a living Comrade, unseen yet known by touch, 'this salvation of God is sent unto these Gentiles, and they will hear it.'

This is the Gospel ; but how shall we preach it to the Poor ?

We must put in action the two principles which constitute the Gospel—Salvation is in all degrees, and Salvation is by Thought-transference from the Manhood of Christ.

If salvation is in all degrees, then the multitude who cannot be anglicanised can yet be Christianised,

and the attempt to make our nation a people of Christ is worth the effort. *Possunt quia posse videntur* is true of those who run their race for the prize of the evangelist. We shall abate nothing of our Anglican beliefs, though we shall discriminate between articles which are statements of facts we know and articles which state our conjecture of facts; nor shall we retrench our Anglican practices, unless there are any which obstruct the passage of Christ's life to the soul. And we shall draw into the system all over whom we can cast the net. But we shall not stop there. Instead of saying that morality is not religion, and 'common Christianity' is not Christian, we shall so honour our Anglicanism as to trust that if the faith of Christ is in the Anglican a virtue will go out of him to make the faith in those who touch and are touched by him. We shall put in use the power of Faith-transference. By that transference we receive the life from Christ, by it we impart it to our brothers. We shall feed the multitude as in the scene on a plain in Galilee when 'Jesus took the loaves and distributed to the disciples and the disciples to them that were set down.' How live an image of our gospelling! From the hands of Jesus we take the bread of life, and through our hands it passes to our brothers, multiplying as it goes. 'Because I live,' said the Master, 'ye shall live also'; and because one of His disciples lives unto Jesus a brother man shall also live.

But if the life can pass at the touch of man on

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man there must be contact. Evangelist and multitude must mingle. Our Gospel must go where of old Wisdom went to deliver her summons, must utter its voice in the streets, in the chief place of concourse, in the opening of the gates. This means many other things than the much-prospered preachings of our open-air evangelists (honour to them and high love for their works' sake) at Hyde Park Corner and sea-sands of the holiday folk. It means that the Church must send more labourers into the harvest-field, deacons in more than title, lay-readers with larger licence, and (what may help most) fully ordained ministers pledged to a 'half-time' service, who, like tent-maker Paul, that self-supporting missionary, may leave the work-place for the house of prayer and the house of prayer for the work-place. It means that she must mobilise a host of women ministers of many grades and varied offices. It means that the layman shall be true *pars reipublicæ*, and his counsels be listened to not only over money matters and table-serving but in the discussion of doctrine and of institution. It means that the citizenship of the sacred community shall not be confined to Jacob who dwells in the Church's tents, a strictly practising Church member, but be enjoyed by Esau, the man of the field, who comes seldom into camp but is no alien at heart, and who is likelier than we to meet Ishmael in the wilds and impart to him some touch of our Christianity. It means that we must bend the stiff frame of our system

of worship to accommodate the people of little leisure. 'Why must our clergy be so wooden,' wrote a bishop, 'as not to suit the morning hour of communion to the times of their flock?' Yes, and why shall our Church be so wooden as to refuse communion at an evening hour, which is for certain worshippers their only time? And our Gospel has the meaning—a harsh one for many of us—that the clergy must surrender all that is not certainly of Christ in the old prerogatives and even some of the more spiritual values of their priesthood. There is scant and ever scantier place for the priest-king in a commonwealth of the mature. There is still, not only for the Christ but for His delegate, an order of Melchizedek, priest-king in Sion; it is the royalty of the ruler who governs by his ministry to his brothers of life,—that one strong thing in grace as in nature, and of the priest who absolves the penitent not by the Confessor's potency but by the live touch of the Soul's-friend on a soul.

But for clergy or for laity there is one all-comprehending task. Till we can bring the kingdoms of the earth into the Kingdom of God and of His Christ we must endeavour to bring that Kingdom into earth's. All that men do and care for, all interests, industries, business, ambitions, must be the theme of our gossellers. For it is in such things that the people have to live, and in these they must be helped to live unto God. The Church has the less use for her minister if he will have no part or lot in the communal affairs of his town-

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ship, because they are not ecclesiastic but municipal ; for the preacher who, when the nation is in the tension of a war for life, tells the chapter of his deanery that 'the less we speak of the war in the pulpit, the better' ; for the Prayer-book rigorist who fears or grudges to intrude into the statutory prayer-order an acknowledgment of an emergent public need or interest of the season, unless an order has come down from the Ordinary ; for the sacramentalist who dares not take the *viaticum* to the dying if the time of his necessity precludes the ritual fast ; for the *pastor ovium* who forsakes the visiting of the homes where his people are, for the sake of more services in the church where his people are not ; for the *pastor agnorum* who neglects that nursery of Churchmen, the Boys' Brigade, and even his own Church Lads, and looks askance at that under-shepherd, the scoutmaster, because, perhaps, 'he followeth not with us.'

A Wesley could claim all the world for his parish. The Parochus of more modest capacity at least should claim for his sphere of influence that much of the world which is the world to his parishioners. Our faith is the victory that overcomes the world : but it cannot overcome it by ignoring.

At this crisis of the nation's fortunes how plain is the task, how imperative the summons to it. What is the unrest of the peoples, the upheavals and contortions of the social strata, but a violent stirring of society's Will-to-Live under the prick of new necessities and hopes—the will to live

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which spurs the communist, the Christian-scientist, the frequenter of Endor. What shall save the Commonwealth from its passions before it suffer wreck upon itself? What shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, the old classes to the new and the new to the old, lest greed and ignorance smite English earth with a curse? What hinder the will to live from becoming a will to enslave life and destroy?

It is the Gospel of the Manhood that must be the saviour of society: the Good Tidings of the Cross and the Rising, the truth that man lives by the *mutual* gift of self between earth and heaven, between man and the brotherhood of men. By this gospel only must Church alike and nation save its soul alive.

## CHAPTER XIV

### CONCLUSION

#### *I.—An Organum of Religion*

‘ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.’ *lost*

THIS essay, now reaching its conclusion, is the writer's attempt to interpret to himself by expansion and illustration that word of an evangelist. The attempt has taken the form of advocating a method of enquiry in religion. It is not a new method, but the oldest and of universal use. Yet as Bacon gave the name of ‘ *Novum Organum* ’ to his instrument of scientific reasoning, though, being the sound way of thinking, it must have been always in use where men thought soundly, so this instrument of religious reasoning might be called new because it is not yet acknowledged as the right method of attaining truth either by ‘ catholic ’ or ‘ evangelical ’ theology or perhaps any other school.

This method of enquiry is to ask whether the confession of a doctrine and the practice of a usage causes a Church and its members to have the life unto God through a life unto Jesus Christ. By this life is meant the unifying of man's nature, in its two functions of thinking and acting, with



the Divine Reality. Life in all its kinds and degrees, on the levels of vegetation, of animation, of social existence, is this unification of the living thing with the world in which it has its being. The unification is effected by the interpenetrating of the substances and forces of the two. Man, the Spirit, lives unto God by an interchange of the forces of his human nature with the forces of the Creative Reality, a life described in the words attributed to Jesus, 'Abide ye in Me and I in you.' According, then, as a creed or an institution promotes the common and the personal life of Christians it is to be accounted a true creed or a right institution.

What is this but the expression in logic of the instinct fundamental in man which is called the Will to Live? As that instinct maintains man's physical and social being, causing him to breathe and feed and reproduce and save his soul alive in dangers, so it prompts him, though less urgently, to preserve his self in the greater world which is his final environment, the Things Invisible. Man eats the food and inhales the airs which nourish him and rejects what is noxious, and by the same discrimination he adopts that way of thinking about the Unseen and that way of addressing his behaviour towards the facts of it, which he finds minister health and energy to his intellectual and moral being. That is, truth of creed and rightness of conduct are ascertained by the test of the life of spirit received by those who believe and practise them.

This has been the real way of belief among Christians, but not the professed way. On one side of Churchmanship the criterion of truth has been the rulings of the Catholic Church, on another side the word of Scripture. Neither Rome nor Protestantism, nor yet Anglicanism which unites the two authorities, has an organum of faith adequate to the needs of to-day. To reach the true source of authority we must go past Church and Bible back to the fountain-head out of which flow both streams of the water of life. We must go back to the Christ who said, 'I am the Life.' Life unto Him is the Christian's guide in thought and action.

Catholic and Evangelical will readily agree to this. The Person of Christ is for both the final court of appeal in questions of faith. They may hesitate, however, to accept my thesis that the Christ to whom we appeal is Jesus in His Abiding Manhood. To insist, as one school does, that matters in dispute must be referred to the judgment of Christ delivered by His recorded utterances during the ministry or received from Him by inspired Church Councils, of the undivided Church, this is not to consult the Living Jesus Christ. An opposite school, which pays no deference to the Councils but much to the Holy Writ (if it be privately, not communally, interpreted), comes, in their claim of 'Experience,' nearer to acceptance of the Manhood as judge and divider of spiritual goods ; but yet comes short, because they do not

recognise the vital truth of catholicity, the requirement that the life to be received from the person of Christ must be the life, not of the individual only but also of the community. To either school our organum of knowledge will seem a *Novum Organum*, and they will rightly demand that its advocates show it to be true as well as new.

It will be challenged on the part of 'Catholics' as a subversion of the principle of Catholicity. On my theory, they will urge, a doctrine could be reformulated and an institution re-shaped at the pleasure of a 'particular' church without the agreement of the whole church. But this, they say, must not be, because *Securus judicat orbis terrarum*, only the united Body of Christ judges with the assured presence in its council of the Spirit ; no council of a branch is able to declare 'It seemeth good to the Holy Ghost and to us.'

To this my answer is that this catholicity is not catholic enough. Catholicity is Wholeness, but what manner of Wholeness ? There is a geometric wholeness, the extension of the Church in terrene space, the Ubique of Vincent ; but on how many matters has the Church been agreed through all its area ? There is a wholeness in time, the *Semper* : this can never be realised till Time has ended its course ; and at any rate a decree of an early century is not decreed by the whole Church, for the coming generations were not there. My contention is that catholicity is neither of space nor time : the wholeness of the Church is Life, the life unto Christ.

'Thy faith hath made thee whole,' said Jesus to the sufferers to whom His touch restored life in the body. He says it to His Church. Her wholeness, her health (which is but other spelling of that word) is the being in faith; and to be in faith is to have life unto Him. This then is what is required of a community in our much-divided Christendom in any question of creed or institution: it must conserve, abrogate, or reform an article or use only by a counselling and communion which is an act of life in Christ and makes this member of His body more alive in her thinkings and her doings. If the decision works this life, it is a catholic decision, it is a pronouncement of the Body of Christ.

And yet I am not superseding Vincent's Canon. I interpret it in the language of an age which has that deeper knowledge of the world which is implicit in the word Life as that principle is understood to-day. There is, I have tried to show (Chapter VII.), a threefold measurement of Life, a Ubique, Semper, ab Omnibus, spiritual counterparts to the geometric and arithmetical measures of Vincent, a breadth and length and depth of the working of the Spirit in the mind of the individual and the Society. There is the Ubique of an extension of that action through the entire consciousness of Church or member, the Semper of its permanence, the ab Omnibus of its intensity. May I not claim that my principle comes not to destroy the canon but to fulfil?

But then there comes the objection that the criterion of Life is impracticable. A new doctrine can be tested by its conformity to scripture and the creeds: these are palpable standards with which to compare an innovation. But life—how can one measure the degree of life received in the soul of a believer or a Church? Life is an impalpable thing, incapable of measurement.

My answer is that life of the spirit is in the same case as life of the body. You cannot say *how much* the life is in an organism spiritual or physical, but you can know whether it is alive or no, and even whether it is gaining life or losing it. Such judgments we habitually make. We comment on the 'deadness' of the doctrinal system of this communion or the worships of that other, and we judge that some persons are 'lively members' of their religious body and that some do not deserve that epithet. And at any rate the living creature itself, whether a single soul or a community, can tell whether or no it is alive: and who else needs to know it than the being that has to live?

One more objection I have to meet, and it may seem the most serious. If we are to decide on a new departure by the experiment of the resulting life we must decide in the dark. For the credal formula or the usage must be chosen to-day, but the life cannot be known till the morrow, and perhaps a distant morrow. We may choose disaster and learn it too late.

It is so. But the answer is twofold. First, in

a choice of faith what matters finally is not that the course chosen should be the most prosperous, but that it should be chosen in faith. If the choice has been made by an act of pure and full self-surrender to the divine Life-giver, if therefore it has been an act of vital union between Church and Christ, then the choice has prospered, be the temporal consequences what they may. For the Church has lived in it unto Christ, and there is no other good than the life unto Christ in God, no other final purpose in her action but to live that life. The whole history of the Church has been the continuous readjustment of beliefs and practices for the safeguarding and increase of that life. Nor does a choice in religion differ in this respect from a choice on the lower level of common morality. We cannot certainly foresee the issue of the step we take with the worthiest motives ; a prudent generosity, a well-calculated self-sacrifice may in the perversity of men and affairs hurt, not help, its object ; but when that happens it is not the virtuous motive that we deplore, and we do not resolve that next time we will act selfishly.

But indeed the decisions of faith are not in regard of this disability at a disadvantage as compared with the decisions even of non-moral mundane business. In marketing and politics we deal with a hidden future and must hazard that we may win. Merchant-venturer and faith-venturer are in the same case as to earthly consequences of a choice. ' Be ye good dealers on exchange ' (*ἀγαθοὶ τραπεζίται*)

is the word of Jesus in an 'unwritten saying.' Can we be this if we will take no risks? But churches are ever slow to make ventures in their business, and has the Church of England been an alert and courageous dealer on the Exchange of Spirit? It is less the steadfastness than the adventurousness of faith that to-day the national Church must find for the recovery to Christ of the nation. In this hour of highest peril, highest opportunity for Church and people, she must cast off her unreadiness and with a heart that 'fears and is enlarged,' must dare to be the equal of her fate. Oh, then, whoever loves England's Church and her mission to the world,

Pray heaven her greatness do not fail  
Through craven fear of being great.

## *II.—The Organum Applied to the Incarnation*

This experimental method, which we have called an Organum of religious knowledge, can, like any other instrument, only be approved by trial of its efficiency. We have put it to proof by applying the method to problems of theology, the Birth and the Resurrection of Christ; to problems of order, episcopacy, and the ministry of women; and to that most formidable yet least declinable enterprise of churchmanship, the preaching of the Gospel to the poor, that is, to the multitude of 'them that are without.' Those experiments we need not recapitulate. But we will look again—for nothing



matters to our argument in comparison with this—at the truth which is both centre and circumference of Christianity, in which and for which all lesser interests of faith subsist, the truth of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. How does our method show as an organ of spiritual knowledge, when the belief that God became Man in the person of Jesus, Son of Mary of Nazareth, is examined by the test that believing it we have life?

But first, before we put this to the proof, why do we trust this probation? Why do I claim that Life is the test of Truth?

It is because the two are one, are diverse aspects of the same reality. Life is the fact of things, Truth the consciousness of the fact. As man himself is Knower and Doer, but in both functions is one person, so is it with his world. It is at once the Thought and the Deed of the Ultimate Reality, which Christians call God and the Father of Jesus Christ. Life is how God makes the world, Truth is how He sees it. Truth for us is how the 'purblind race of men' is able to see it.

Life is how God made and for ever makes the world. For when did Life begin? When the morning stars sang together at the dawn. What is the power which makes and orders the heavenly bodies but a self-interchange of each with all, the mutual force which we call attraction; and the interaction which we call the reflection of light? This is Life at the level of the inanimate and unconscious. Life on our little planet, however it



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came there, is a more delicate intercourse, that of organism and environment. By inhalation and exhalation of elements of the atmosphere the herb springs and 'the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord.' Man whose breath is in his nostrils lives by the like exchange, sustains his animal existence by the air he breathes and the fruits he eats, and his social existence by the mutual service of family and member. Lastly, man's life as a being spiritual is his uprendering to God, the Whole of things, of the forces that are his mind and will, and God's rendering back into man's bosom of the forces of the Creator Spiritus.

Man's only interest, then, is to live, and his final interest is to live unto God. Religion is the way and means to this, and nothing in religion is of religious value unless it is this means. Such elements, then, of a religious system as a creed or a sacrament are necessary if they are the cause of life; no otherwise. Whether the confession of an article and the observance of a practice is to be demanded of Christians can only be known by the experiment which tests this efficacy of the confession and observance. The experiment is made by the Christian's attempt to have life through believing the article and keeping the rule. This experiment has been made by the Church of the past, and the accepted creeds and usages are the result. But the experiment must continue. The finality assumed by some Catholics is, under the category of Life, no more reasonable than it would

be to maintain the feudal system or absolute monarchy in industrial England because under feudalism and autocracy the commonwealth had a good measure of social vitality—a parallel which suggests shrewd misgivings as to the finality of some venerated institutions, even if they bear with good right the name of ‘Catholic.’

We have, then, to ask how a doctrine of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ formulated by the Gospel of the Manhood stands the test applied by our Organum? Does it make life in the Church and the Churchman who accept and use it?

The historic Incarnation, as the fact has been here conceived by us, is the event in history that once in time one man of all the children of men lived for a term of mortal years in perfect union of His mind and will with the divine Reality which He called His and our Father in heaven. This union of Jesus with God, which the partial record of a brief career could indicate but not demonstrate, was attested decisively by His death of self-sacrifice which issued in a divine life of His personality as man, a life of which we men have knowledge by the touch of experience. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ is the absolute oneness, at first in time, now in eternity, of Jesus of Nazareth with God who is all in all; the oneness of Life, the union of two by mutual indwelling. This divine life of union with God, Christ communicates to His human brethren, and this is the action which we call the Atonement or the Salvation of men. The means

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by which this communication of the life unto God is made is a spiritual union of a man's soul with the Abiding Manhood of Jesus. This has been called 'faith in the name of Jesus.' I have called it by the closer, more expressive name of "life unto Jesus," the mutual gift of self between the man and Christ in His Manhood.

I have gone further. I have ventured to indicate more precisely the nature of the action by which Christ causes the believer to receive from Himself the divine life. When we contemplate human nature and certain powers of it which recent study is bringing to our view, I seem to see, as in a glass darkly, a faint but ever clearer-growing image of the process by which life unto Jesus creates in the man a life unto God—a life like that of Jesus Himself so far as the finite can be like the infinite. This image seen in the dim mirror of human fact is the law of Thought-transference. Mental and spiritual conditions of one human being can be transferred to the soul of a fellow-man, so that this other thinks and acts as does the former, places himself in a like practical and intellectual attitude to his world, has a similar disposition of mind, heart, and will. A transference of this kind takes place, of course, in all social influence of man on man, when the communication is through eye or ear or other signalling by the senses, as when orator, writer, or musician conveys an idea or an impulse to his fellows. But also there can be this transference when there is no contact through the

senses or any instrument employed by them, and when the communicators are separated by great intervals of space. Intercourse of this kind is rare, brief, faint, and commonly of small import. But it does happen. Motions of thought and will that rise in one human consciousness are sometimes transmitted to another where there is no bodily presence of the transmitter to the recipient. And the process, which at present we can only guess, is most reasonably interpreted if we call it *a specific activity of the life in conscious beings*, an act in which one person lives unto another by interchange of spiritual forces in the two. It is a mode of human life.

The fact of Thought-transference is not yet an axiomatic truth. There are, or lately were, persons of highly competent judgment who refuse to admit that there is such a thing. Well, the track of most discoveries has been marked by a line of tombstones of dead denials. Their maintainers must not be reproached but rather thanked as having fallen in the service of science, holding the pass against presumptuous, hasty speculations. Let us gratefully acknowledge the service, and go on with our discovering.

My hypothesis, then, of the manner in which Christ imparts life to men is that He uses this instrumentality—the transference of mind and will. ‘Let that mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,’ wrote Paul, not quite in my present meaning, but giving me the aptest word for it. If

the believer makes surrender of his thinkings and purposings to Jesus and finds that thought becomes clearer in him and resolution more strong, if, that is, in the language of our theory he has attempted and prospered in the act of living unto Christ, what has happened is that something in the mind of Jesus has been transmitted to the mortal, the thoughts of Jesus become his thoughts, the ways of Jesus his ways. He has let that mind be in him which not *was* in Christ, but *is* in Christ, now and where He dwells in the Infinite. Across the interval not of continents and oceans but of the Heavenly places the consciousness of Christ is present to the consciousness of the man. Jesus is saying again to a disciple, 'Behold, it is I Myself.'

But what is this 'something in the mind of Jesus' which passes to the human mind? As Christ is God there can be no imagining by us of what He is thinking and purposing yonder in the eternity. But as Christ is Man, though with a Manhood that has infinity and eternity, we can in a measure conceive of what passes there in his *human* consciousness. The mind of Jesus, as we knew it on earth, was a mind of Sacrifice, love of God and love of His own that were in the world, a love of them unto the end. This mind of Sacrifice is assuredly his also beyond that end. In the endless life His thoughts and ways are thoughts of love and ways of sacrifice. These it is, this love and sacrifice, that pass to the souls of His disciples by the mystic thought-transference. But

these thoughts and ways are the elements of His Manhood's life unto God ; for in heaven, as in earth, life is sacrifice and sacrifice is life. Then if they enter a soul of ours, that soul is made alive unto God. By this Atonement, this touch of the live coal from the ever-burning sacrifice, his iniquity is taken away and his sin is purged.

This conception, then, of that which is but in part conceivable, the Incarnation, to which I have given, I trust in no presumptuous spirit, the name of a Gospel of the Manhood—how does it bear the test of being examined by our Organum, the experiment of Life ?

It must be made to stand comparison with those envisagements of the truth which hitherto have served the disciples of Christ as the explicit or the unconscious formulation of their faith.

There has been the notion among the simpler sort, and many, too, of the not simple who would not own it for theirs, that a Divine One from heaven could visit earth in human semblance, as the rustic folk of Lystra believed. Or as the Hebrew fancied that spirits of evil could inhabit a man, so Christians of ruder mind have figured the Incarnation as a holy counterpart of ' Possession.' Or they have been Docetics, sophisticated Lystræans, making the Christ's earthly sojourn an act of personation, a kind of Mystery Play in which He wore manhood for an hour on the stage of earth, then shed the mask on a return to heaven. With these barbarous

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conceivings we need not compare our doctrine in respect of power to minister the life spiritual. Let us match it against formulations which have the authority of the Church.

We have to look at the statement of the Incarnation which has highest authority, that in the prelude of the Fourth Gospel. 'The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.' That is a metaphor, drawn from the philosophies of the age. And the metaphor only figures, and that in most abstract shape, the fact that an Incarnation there was : it does not tell us *how* it was effected, in what way the Word was made flesh. Those who desire to think not in words but in things will not be contented with this gospeller's Prelude, but will pass on to read the story of the Ministry in which he gives feature to his abstraction. Which of these two, one asks, has given life to the Church ? Is it the abstract formula in the Prelude, or the human detail of the Story ?

After much contention of Christian metaphysicians the formula was at last decided on of 'Two natures in one person.' That is a naked logical schematism. Its acceptance may have vivified the logical faculty of those whose reason it satisfied, but one cannot think the moral force of any Christian could be greatly quickened by his assent to the formula. It offers faith a stone when faith asked for bread.

We have long ago bettered that scholasticism and have recognised Jesus of Nazareth as Incarnate because by His teaching and example of conduct,



but above all by the love shown in His death of self-sacrifice, He revealed God to us, made visible the divine mind and will, Heaven's hatred of sin and desire to redeem from it. Belief in such a Christ has power upon men's reason and some power also on their practical nature; but how much? Has it been enough even for those who were in some degree 'in the way of salvation,' had some knowledge of Christ? Has it been strong enough to stem a passion-storm, control a greed, mortify a lust? Has it been, could it be, any power at all on the mortal multitudes of the heathen who never heard of Christ, and of those in Christendom who have heard but not attended? Yet Christ is for these also: on them too, on all that is human everywhere, He works a work, if He is in truth the Incarnate. They who know not Jesus may yet be known by Jesus: they have not come within the touch of His Church, but His own touch can find them. How should it not? It is the hand of a Man, but a hand that can stretch as far among us as His of whom we say that in the uttermost parts of our world, even there shall His hand lead us and right hand hold. The hand of a Man, but one who is the Word Incarnate, the embodiment of the divine-human Wisdom which reaches from the one end unto the other, sweetly and strongly ordering all things for the weal of the men He loves.

No, this Christ is not enough for the mortal need, a Christ who works a saving work on men only by



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a word and an example of conduct and a wonder of self-sacrifice wrought long ago and once for all ; a Christ who exerts power only on the narrow circle of the congregation of Christ's Church, the scanty company of His faithful people. If only so we have learned Christ, we have not seen the vision that maketh live, a vision of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world—the world.

A vision that makes to live—is our Gospel of the Manhood that ?

It must make us live in both halves of our being, that in us which thinks and that which acts. Does it minister life then to the mind ?

(i.) The life of man's reason is to know truth, and there is full life and health of his reason only if his knowledge of things is a unity, a self-consistent whole of truth. If, then, the religious belief offered him cannot be unified with the rest of his knowledge of fact, if the theology conflicts with his experience, there is not unity but discord in his thoughts, and his mind does not gain life from the belief. The ordinary man nowadays who rejects Christianity does so on the ground that the Gospel will not square with what he knows of things as they are. The Christian faith sounds like a fable, the picture of heaven looks like a fairyland. ' You tell me of a better world I may gain if I give up the good things I try to get here, but you show me no proof of this. I must judge of the universe as I find it ; and the part of it I know, this present life of men, where it pays best to work and fight

for oneself, does not make me expect that other parts will be on a different plan. And you tell me I am a miserable sinner, but that my sins which are scarlet can be made white by your method. No doubt I have my sins, but scarlet is not the colour of them, nor of my neighbours', most of them. Experience is my guide, and it contradicts your gospel.'

To this man we can answer—You are mistaken about your experience. Selfishness is not the law of human life as you know it. On the contrary, life is sacrifice. Nature lives, and human nature lives by self-sacrifice. For what else is the life of herb and tree, insect and bird and beast, man's body and man's family? All these come into being and are kept in being by this mutuality, this interchange of the part and the whole, the living creature and the world it lives in. Earth with its people is God's living creature which exists by a gift of self answered by a gift of God. Mutual Sacrifice is the secret of the universe. That secret is half revealed and half concealed in the visible movement of things; nature is always striving to live a full life of union with the power that made it, but is always failing and dying out;

The woods decay, the woods decay, and fall,  
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath.

But then in Jesus Christ the secret is laid bare; the clue that glimpsed and vanished again now shines out through all its length. Jesus gained life

no otherwise than as all things gain it, by giving up self to God. But they gain a little life for a little time, and lose it : He has won all life and keeps it for ever. According, then, to the vision of things as the Gospel of the Manhood unfolds it the Incarnation is Creation at last created, is God's living creature, Humankind, come wholly to life. All that man knows of earth and of heaven becomes by this a unity of knowledge ; he sees existence whole and one. The Gospel of the Manhood makes life in his mind.

(ii.) Does it also make life in the will : does it quicken Man the Doer ?

An answer should be ready and brief, since the will reveals itself in actions which are open and measurable. But how to be brief when the answer must be the result of an experiment which has been making in the twenty centuries of Church history and also has to be made afresh for himself by every new believer ? How can one epitomise the Church's vast experiment ; how presume to interpret another Christian's experience of to-day ?

Will not this way serve ? There is one spirit of a man who has been nearer to the Christ than any other follower of Christ whose life-course offers itself for comparison. The faith-history of St. Paul shall be our epitome of the Church's faith-story and the type of all personal experience. He shall speak for us all, and we will judge each for himself whether he speaks our mind.

What was Paul's experience of Christ in the sphere of his practical action? Was it as the 'Christ in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' that the Unseen One guided his movements, nerved his ventures, carried his burdens; or was it rather as the Person of the martyred prophet whom St. Paul affirmed to be alive?

'I am Jesus whom thou persecutest' is the beginning of that experience. But Saul was persecuting not the Lord of Glory of whom he knew nothing, but Jesus of Nazareth, enemy of Paul's church while he lived, and still its adversary by the working of His memory on His followers. Presently at Jerusalem, 'I saw Him saying unto me, Get thee out, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me.' Testimony concerning whom? The crucified prophet whose followers he had imprisoned and beaten. He journeys through Anatolia on a mission under sealed orders, and at a crossways halts uncertain of his goal. One was with him there and suffered him not to take the false road: it was 'the spirit of Jesus' that steered him here. He works at Corinth, a threatened man, under the malevolent eyes of the Jewish community, but the Lord speaks to him in a vision, 'Be not afraid, I am with thee, no man shall hurt thee, for I have much people in this city.' They were the people who professed themselves followers of a martyr, now divine, but not yet known to them as one with the Word through whom the worlds were made. In prison at Jerusalem 'the

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Lord stood by him ' and bade him be of good cheer. It was the Lord 'of whom Paul had testified at Jerusalem,' and this could be no other than the prophet whom Jerusalem last had slain. Yesterday Paul had stood on the castle steps appealing to an infuriated crowd: it is a man, ' that Just One,' whom he claims to have seen and heard the voice of His mouth at Damascus, and this Just One could only be for these Jewish hearers the Nazarene preacher of righteousness.

Will it, then, be any other than this same Humanity to whom this great Christian confesses that he owes his ability, in ordeals more definitely of the spirit, to resist and to adventure? The Jesus Christ our Lord through whom he thanks God that he is delivered from the mastery of the flesh; the Christ through whose strengthening he could do all things and dare all things—what other deliverer and enabler was this than the human Jesus of whom once he was the persecutor and for whom he now was the persecuted? It was no other. More indeed He was than that Jesus, even to infinity more, as Paul with growing apprehension learned the Christ. More, but nothing less than the Manhood which abode awhile in Galilee and for ever abides in all places, the heavenly and those of earth.

The experience of Paul has been echoed, faintly but unmistakably, by experiences which have been a believer's own in all the churches through all

their times. And not always 'faintly.' Since the above was written such an echo has been heard by us in the passing day. Many of us have lately known a man in Christ in whom that primal experience of an Apostle has repeated itself with singular vividness. He is that notable Christian mystic from the East, the Sadhu Sundar Singh. He has described <sup>1</sup> the incident of his conversion in boyhood, after vehement opposition :

' In the room where I was praying I saw a great light. . . . As I looked into the light I saw the form of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . I heard a voice saying in Hindustani, " How long will you persecute me? I have come to save you." The thought then came to me, " Jesus Christ is not dead but living and it must be He Himself." So I fell at His feet and got this wonderful Peace which I could not get anywhere else. . . . I told my father, " I have discovered now that Jesus Christ is alive and have determined to be His disciple." '

If the vision was shaped by a knowledge of St. Paul's story (as most of us will think, though the Sadhu believes he did not yet know it), the reality of the spiritual experience is not therefore to be discredited, for with the Sadhu, as with his great prototype, the seal of the vision has been the power and the permanence of its effect upon his life.

On the experience, then, of Paul who was in

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<sup>1</sup> ' The Sadhu,' Streeter and Appasamy.

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Christ before us, corroborated by the thousand thousand less articulate testimonies of holy and humble men of heart such as this Indian saint, and not wholly unconfirmed by the 'all-but hushed voices' of instincts in Christian hearts that are our own—on this testimony we rest our assurance that Christ works life in the Will as in the Mind of men, and works it by the powers in Him of the Manhood which is eternal and infinite. By this 'we know that Jesus Christ is alive,' and that 'Because He lives we live also.'

## ENVOI

As the last pages of this book are passing through the press comes an illustration, singularly apt and beautiful, of its central idea.

It is a letter in the *Times* of February 1, 1922, relating an incident in the life of Sir Ernest Shackleton, the Arctic explorer, whose death on his ship, the *Quest*, had just been reported. Admiral J. Moresby writes :

"In your summary of Sir E. Shackleton's adventurous life you mention that after the *Endurance* had been abandoned, her crew found refuge on Elephant Island. Shackleton, with two companions (seamen) managed to reach South Georgia, and from there brought relief to his comrades.

"Of this hazardous voyage in an open boat, writing of it to me, he recalled the fact that not only to himself, but also spontaneously to his companions, there was a fourth Personality, unseen, present with them! He added, 'The same Personality will guide the *Quest*.'"

The *Quest*—might it not be a name for the Navicella, the vessel of the adventuring Church, now in a new age steering forth to new discovery? Will not the Unseen Personality be present to set her course?

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